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of Israel's expulsion in December of some leading Hamas activists, DFLP officials now deem it politically necessary.

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1

Sanctions grind Iraqis down, even reach elite

By Victoria Graham
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — For most Iraqis, U.N. sanctions, scarcity and an annual inflation rate of 8,000 per cent have drained all pleasure from life. There is not even sugar for the national sweet tooth.

Once upon a time, before the Gulf war, Tawfik's little girl Amira would rush laughing into her father's arms when he came home from work, squirreling through his pockets for the candy he always brought.

These days, his pockets are empty. He has no sweets and little money.

Despair grips Tawfik's small family: his wife, Amal; 6-year-old son, Adil, and Amira, who no longer asks for candy or expects it.

"I've nothing to give her and it hurts to see her eyes," said Tawfik, who works in a government office for about 300 dinars a month. That is \$100 at the official exchange rate, but less than \$10 in reality.

"Our life is drab," he said. "We don't laugh or picnic or have fun any more. We're too tired

just surviving. We only live for the day and try not to think ahead."

Iraq, which has the greatest appetite for sweets of the Arab countries, literally has become a nation without candy and desserts because of limited sugar imports.

Candy stores and ice cream parlors have been closed by the government, along with soft-drink plants and many other factories that use sugar.

There is a black market in baklava pastries. A box of candy is one of the most appreciated gifts a foreigner can bring.

The daily hardship and sacrifice of individuals is surrounded by a vast programme to rebuild bridges, repair other damage wrought by allied bombing, and create new industrial and irrigation projects.

President Saddam Hussein's government is believed to have spent some of its gold reserves on the work, but officials say much of the reconstruction has used materials stockpiled before the war.

Well-to-do Iraqis and the elite, a tiny fraction of Iraq's 18 million people, still live in relative comfort, but they, too, feel besieged.

To maintain their living standards or raise cash so they can leave the country — many are selling heirlooms, silver tea sets, treasured wedding presents, jewelry, fur coats, carpets and antique furniture.

One family sold everything and moved to Jordan, but left their furniture in place until they were gone so no one would suspect. They told neighbours they were just taking a vacation.

The Tigris, reddish-pink with churned mud, moves sluggishly through the city. On a jetty beneath the abandoned British embassy, men fish for masgout, a delicacy served in riverside restaurants. Like candy, masgout is beyond the reach of most Iraqis.

Women who used to buy bread or take flour to a bakery now bake at home. Children drop out of school to work.

Tire repair is a new trade. Because tires cannot be imported, people mend them with rubber patches and shoe soles, sometimes sewn on.

Little medicine is available because Iraq's assets abroad have been frozen. Malnutrition and disease are serious problems among the poor.

Mustafa, a skinny 10-year-old

diabetic, desperately needs insulin, but cannot get enough because the government has limited supplies and his family is poor.

He is one of eight children and has dropped out of school to do odd jobs, like selling cigarettes or date syrup a substitute for manufactured candy — scrubbing old carpets or cleaning shops.

Sometimes he begs for money on the street, or for stale bread and leftovers from foodstalls.

His father, a widower, drives a taxi and the other children work or beg.

What little the family earns helps to buy insulin, but Mustafa has had to reduce his dosage so the medicine will last longer.

Crime is rampant in Baghdad, especially theft and car hijacking. For the first time, the press is reporting lurid crimes — murder, rape and mutilation — usually linked to robbery, sometimes with whole families as victims.

One of the most significant changes is the erosion of personal relationships between husbands and wives, among brothers, and friends.

Divorce is increasing and the number of marriages has declined significantly, both for economic reasons. Some impoverished men

just walk out on their wives. Family violence is increasing, along with prostitution and alcohol abuse.

"Because life is dull and hard, it's easier for men and women to separate," said Hussein, who runs a small clothing store. "We don't have good times together any more. We're not so close and we fight about things we used to laugh about."

He said his wife, Nadia, once known for her lively spirit, pretty clothes and well-coiffed hair, "has let herself go. She doesn't take care of herself anymore."

Nadia, in her late 20s, now mends and alters her children's clothes and buys none for herself. She bakes her own bread and stands in food lines for hours, cries easily and snaps at her children.

She no longer sees friends, never gets her hair done and sometimes bites her fingernails. Because Nadia and Hussein no longer can afford birth-control pills, she worries that she may be pregnant with a child they cannot afford.

"My wife's tired. I'm tired. We must worry about getting through the next days and hope the sanctions will end," Hussein said.

Egypt hints at easing tension with Iraq

By Samia Nakhoul
Reuters

CAIRO — There is still no question of Egypt normalising relations with Iraq but diplomats see the first signs that the hostility which dates from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 is beginning to ease.

Officials say a decision to send a senior diplomat to run Egypt's caretaker mission in Baghdad is simply aimed at improving services to the large Egyptian community there, not raising the level of contacts with the government of Saddam Hussein.

Arab diplomats agree that President Hosni Mubarak, who played a big part in the U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in 1991, will not restore normal relations while President Saddam is in power.

But they report that Egypt is increasingly concerned Iraq's weakness is allowing the radical Islamic government in Iran to reassert its influence in the Gulf and elsewhere in the Middle East.

"All we did is decide to send a senior diplomat to look after the mission there...any restoration of relations between Egypt and Iraq will not include Saddam Hussein," an Egyptian official said.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa last week denied a report that Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz would visit Cairo.

But Egypt's main newspapers, which follow government guidelines, have refrained recently from attacking Iraq. They strongly condemned the U.S.-led alliance when its warplanes struck at targets in Iraq in January.

"Definitely there will not be resumption of diplomatic relations on high levels, but definitely there is a warming up in relations because of Iran...tension between Iraq and Egypt is melting away slowly," one Arab diplomat told Reuters.

"Egypt has a strategic outlook and decision. It has an interest in a strategic balance of power in the Gulf. Egypt sees Iraq as the only stumbling block against Iran in the Gulf."

"If Iraq is fragmented, the effects would be damaging to Egypt and to all the neighbouring states if Iraq is weakened further, Iran will get stronger," the diplomat said.

The Egyptian decision to send a senior diplomat to Baghdad follows an attempt by the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Yasser Arafat, to mediate. He brought a message from President Saddam to Mr. Mubarak this month offering reconciliation and dialogue.

Mr. Mubarak remains deeply suspicious of President Saddam, whom he repeatedly accused of stabbing him in the back when Egypt was trying to mediate between Iraq and Kuwait before the invasion.

"The experiences of the near past taught us not to take such matters lightly...we should have a deep and sound evaluation," Mr. Mubarak said after hearing Mr. Arafat's message. "Such thoughtful thinking will spare Egypt from taking any hasty act that could harm its interests."

Proposed value of downtown Beirut property causes stir

BEIRUT (AP) — An assessment of property value in war-damaged downtown Beirut caused an uproar Friday among owners and tenants, who called a meeting to protest against the move.

The Committee of Right and Property Holders in Downtown Beirut, which represents tenants and owners, urged the 150,000 people affected to contact its offices to organise against a controversial plan to reconstruct the capital's old sector.

An initial assessment, released by a government sponsored committee Thursday, set the average price for one square metre in downtown Beirut at \$1,400.

The leftist newspaper Al Safir, in its main story, said the proposed estimate was in fact "one third of the real value of most property and rights" in downtown Beirut, which took the brunt of the 1975-1990 civil war.

Real estate in downtown Beirut costs between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a square metre and in downtown Damascus \$4,500 and up for commercial property, although obviously those cities have not been devastated by civil war.

The Beirut estimate was a crucial step in setting up the real estate company, which will carry out the reconstruction of 662,700 square metres downtown.

Owners of property and rights would be given shares in the developed property equal to the value of their assessed rights. However, a 1991 law providing for the private sector to shoulder responsibility for rebuilding the commercial district did not draw a clear line between property owners and right holders. That left the door open for conflicts among tenants and between tenants and owners.

The secretary-general of the founding authority for the real estate company, Nasser Al Shamma, said the firm was not expected to start apportioning shares before the summer of 1993, after the release of the final assessment of property prices in downtown Beirut.

The final assessment would follow appeals by owners of rights and property. Al Safir noted that most right owners would not be able to appeal the initial assessment because "it only covered the proposed price for real estate and did not refer to rights of tenants."

Foreigners killed Saudi aides, Thai minister says

BANGKOK (R) — Thailand's interior minister blamed foreigners Friday for the murder of four Saudi Arabian diplomats in 1989 and 1990, but said a Thai policeman was responsible for the related disappearance of a Saudi businessman.

"The (Interior Ministry) committee has scrutinised the evidence and believes that the causes and motivation of the cases stem from religious conflict in which the persons who took the action are foreigners," General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh said in a prepared statement at a news conference.

He did not say what country the foreigners came from. But an interior ministry source who asked not to be named told Reuters Iraqis carried out the killings in 1989 and 1990.

Investigations showed the gunmen arrived in Bangkok three days before the 1990 assassinations and that the guns used were of a type common in the Middle East, the source said.

Saudi Arabia responded to the deaths by recalling its ambassador and refusing to issue new visas to Thai workers. Some



A Kuwaiti holds up an American flag during celebrations marking the end of Iraqi occupation two years ago (AFP photo)

Kuwaiti women activists press for vote

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti women activists are still waiting for the vote two years after the emirate's Gulf war liberation spurred their hopes of reform.

Male opposition to an expanded franchise persists despite the role women played in the underground resistance to Iraq's seven-month occupation, the activists said.

"Under occupation Kuwaiti men and women worked together against the occupying forces and the occupying forces tortured and arrested Kuwaiti citizens irrespective of their sex," businessman Najat Sultan told Reuters.

"Why can't we close ranks and work together now? You find women at all levels in the ministries and this (the vote) is the only area from which we are isolated," she added.

The debate over women's suffrage often bogs down in law. Proponents cite article 29 of the constitution which states that all men and women are equal in the eyes of the constitution.

Opponents cite article two of the 1962 election law which says only men over the age 21 can vote.

During the war, the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al

Sabah, said he would consider giving Kuwaiti women the right to vote, although he added the issue required time.

The debate revived when the country's lively parliamentary tradition was restored in October after a six-year break. All-male elections produced a 50-seat, all-male assembly dominated by government critics.

But since the war senior government officials have proposed studying only whether to grant more Kuwaiti males the right to vote — eligible voters count for only 15 per cent of the total number of 600,000 Kuwaiti citizens.

"The promise that women will be granted their political rights must be fulfilled, because Kuwaiti women performed such heroic roles during the invasion and offered martyrs from among their ranks," said Awaif Al Majid.

Ms. Majid, a Red Crescent society worker, helped to channel food and medicine to resistance fighters during the occupation.

"The level of education between Kuwaiti men and women is the same, so why are most men asked to compete with us?" asked lawyer Badriya Al Awadi.

Their comments were carried in a special issue on women's rights published by the English-language Arab Times to mark Friday's second anniversary of the liberation.

Support for the women activists came this week from new U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who said on a brief visit that he would like to see votes extended to women.

Kuwaiti women already have a degree of freedom rare in neighbouring Saudi Arabia. Female drivers in smart cars and fashionable Western clothes are a regular sight.

Unlike in some other Gulf states, Kuwaiti women hold senior government posts and vote in banking and corporate elections.

Some women activists would like to stand for parliament as well, but Islamists among them think this is going too far.

Souad Jabrallah, head of the women's committee of the Social Reform Society, said that, of the 60 per cent of Kuwaiti women who wore the Islamic veil, a majority wanted the vote but only a minority wanted the right to stand for parliament.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Syria rejects EC aid, human rights link

BRUSSELS (R) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa Thursday rejected any link between his country's human rights record and financial aid from the European Community (EC). European Commission sources said. They said European External Political Affairs Commissioner Hans van den Broek told Mr. Sharaa he hoped the European Parliament next month would unblock financial aid to Syria worth 158 million ECUs (\$186 million). The elected assembly has so far prevented the money being sent because of alleged human rights abuses. Mr. Van den Broek told Mr. Sharaa there had been positive developments in Syria's human rights record but further improvements were needed. The sources quoted Mr. Van den Broek as saying Syria still held political prisoners and some were detained without being charged and were denied contacts with their families. The sources said Mr. Sharaa rejected any link between EC aid and Syria's internal affairs. He also said the community should apply equal standards when examining the human rights situation in different countries. Mr. Van den Broek, appearing earlier before the parliament's foreign affairs and security committee, said Syria had an important role in Middle East peace diplomacy but withholding the aid could lead to its further isolation.

French police search Iranian TV office

PARIS (R) — French police have searched the Paris offices of the Iranian radio and television network (IRIB) in connection with the 1991 killing of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar. IRIB officials said Thursday. French officials could not immediately confirm the operation which IRIB said took place late Wednesday. A statement from the network said: "French police suspicions about someone once linked to IRIB, long before the Bakhtiar affair, should not be held against this office today." It was referring to Massoud Hendei, who was IRIB's Paris correspondent in 1984 and is said by French police to be a great nephew of Iran's late revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Hendei is one of four Iranians held in French prisons pending trial in connection with Bakhtiar's murder. Bakhtiar was killed in his villa near Paris in August 1991.

Libya to move embassies to Qadhafi's birthplace

TUNIS (R) — Libya has told foreign embassies it plans to move them from Tripoli to leader Muammar Qadhafi's birthplace on the Gulf of Sirte, diplomats in the Libyan capital said Friday. "The Foreign Relations Bureau (foreign ministry) sent us a note asking us to let them know our needs regarding offices and housing in view of a transfer to Ras Lanuf," a European diplomat told Reuters. The diplomats said the government had not yet set a date for the move to Ras Lanuf, Colonel Qadhafi's birthplace 600 kilometres east of Tripoli. Libyans believe Col. Qadhafi aims to make his home region in the Gulf of Sirte into the capital and economic centre of the country. The government's weekly meetings take place in the town of Sirte, 200 kilometres west of Ras Lanuf. Ras Lanuf is one of Libya's main oil terminals and a centre for the petrochemical industry.

First woman in Cyprus cabinet for 23 years

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus named its first woman cabinet minister for 23 years Thursday. Clair Angelidou, a headmistress-turned-member of parliament, was appointed education minister in the 11-member Greek-Cypriot cabinet of President-elect Glafcos Clerides. The new foreign minister will be businessman Alecos Michaelides, a former president of the Cypriot parliament and vice-president of Mr. Clerides' centre-right party Democratic Rally, the largest on the island. Mr. Clerides and his new government will be sworn in Sunday.

Delors in Rabat to discuss new EC deal

RABAT (R) — European Commission President Jacques Delors is visiting Rabat for talks with King Hassan and government leaders on a new partnership agreement between Morocco and the European Community (EC). Last December the EC adopted a draft mandate to negotiate a partnership agreement with Morocco involving permanent political dialogue, economic cooperation, financial aid and progressive moves towards a free trade zone. The negotiation mandate should be finalised later this year. "I am very glad to take the opportunity to meet His Majesty King Hassan...and discuss with (the Moroccan) government the main problems we have in common," Mr. Delors told reporters on arrival in Rabat Thursday. A senior EC official said he would discuss the EC's relations with Morocco and meet business leaders during his official three-day visit. The EC granted Morocco a four-year financial aid package worth a total 498 million ECUs (\$590 million) in December. The EC is by far Morocco's largest trading partner, accounting for \$3.65 billion in imports and \$2.55 billion in exports in 1992. Morocco also signed a four-year fisheries accord with the EC last year under which it stands to get 468 million ECUs (\$556 million) in compensation for allowing EC fishing vessels to continue fishing in Moroccan waters.

2 pro-Kurdish men found dead in Turkey

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — A body believed to be that of a Kurdish politician missing for a month has been found in southeastern Turkey, local journalists said Friday. They said a mutilated corpse found at a riverside in Tunceli province was identified by his family from his clothes as that of Cemal Akar, a Kurdish party official in Elazig province. Mr. Akar, local leader of the minor Ozdep (Freedom and Democracy Party) in Erzurum province, had been missing since Jan. 25. Journalists in Batman said 48-year-old pharmacist Ahmet Arkin also was found dead near a village Friday after disappearing on his way home Thursday evening. He was a member of the People's Labour Party, a Kurdish group in parliament. The latest deaths bring the number of the so-called mystery killings in the tense southeast to 43 this year. The region has been racked by a violent separatist Kurdish insurgency waged since 1984 by the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) and an equally relentless fight by security forces. About 450 such killings in 1992 have thrown a blanket of fear and suspicion on the region, with pressure mounting on the government to take more effective measures.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Les Aventures de L'espace
18:30 Envoyé Spécial
19:00 News in French
19:15 Fenêtre sur
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 America's Funniest Home Videos
21:00 Perspectives
21:30 Science Workshop
22:00 News in English
22:30 "Bester"

PRAYER TIMES
04:45 Fajr
06:02 (Sunrise) Duha
11:40 Dhur
15:03 'Asr
17:35 Maghrib
18:52 'Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swidieh, Tel. 310740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De in Salle Church Tel. 661757

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be warm and partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be light and variable. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Mis./Max. temp.
Amman 8 / 18
Aqaba 15 / 27
Deserts 7 / 20
Jordan Valley 12 / 24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 21, Aqaba 31. Humidity readings:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 35 per cent. Aqaba 24 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Al Ajarm 894184
Dr. Ahmad Khamis 747884
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846070
Dr. Fakhri Tayeh 855880
Firas pharmacy 661912
Perdons pharmacy 778336
Al Asana pharmacy 637025
Naima pharmacy 626072
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649445
Shimoon pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847832

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 62.621111.637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630371
Hotel Complaints 661176
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 781111
Complaints 661111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111

HOSPITALS
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 06-53200

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Al-Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 644241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Maluf, J. Amman 631400
Palestine, Shamsi 664174
Shimoon Hospital 669131
University Hospital 645845
Al-Muhsin Hospital 607270
The Islamic, Adabi 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Adabi 666164/66
Istafan, Al-Muhsin 777101/3
Al-Basim, J. Amman 775111/26
Army, Marfa 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

ZARQA:
Dr. Youssef Awad 994767

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
11:40 Aqaba, Helsinki (RJ)
11:50 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
11:50 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:50 Aqaba, Helsinki (RJ)
12:10 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 London (RJ)
12:10 Cairo (RJ)
12:10 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
12:10 Jeddah (RJ)
12:10 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:00 Laraca (CY)
08:15 Beirut (ME)
12:30 Sams (TV)
20:00 Doha (QF)
23:25 Damascus, Paris (AF)

MARKET PRICES
Up/Down price in Jds per kg
Apple 700 / 520
Banana 700 / 700
Bassam (Mekranmar) 400 / 440
Beans 1300 / 1400
Cabbage 100 / 140
Carrot 210 / 180
Cauliflower 70 / 30
Cucumbers (large) 350 / 300
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 400
Eggplant 280 / 200
Garlic 800 / 600
Grapefruit 200 / 150
Lemon 460 / 320
Marrow (large) 400 / 300
Marrow (small) 750 / 300
Mint 120
Onion (dry) 210 / 180
Onion (green) 380 / 350
Orange 280 / 200
Pepper (hot) 800 / 600
Pepper (sweet) 700 / 500
Potato 250 / 170
Tomato 150 / 80
Spinach 300 / 150

كندا من الامارات



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attends Friday prayers at Al Fakhri Mosque in Amman. Following the prayer, the prince toured the market where he met with citizens, inspected their conditions and listened to their requests and comments. The Prince

stressed the need for the local councils and administrations to coordinate with the Ministry of Awqaf to establish a link between sermons and religious lessons on the one hand and people's daily needs, conditions and social behaviours on the other.

Potential for cooperation with Islamic republics 'tremendous', says Jordanian team on return from their 5-state tour

By Ella Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian delegation, headed by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ed Ben Zeid, returned to Amman on Friday after a five-day tour of five Islamic republics. The tour was the first of its kind and aimed at strengthening ties between Jordan and the Islamic republics.

within the coming few months. The idea of creating joint business councils in each of the Islamic countries to supervise economic activities with Jordan was eagerly welcomed because such councils, said Mr. Abu Hassan, would be in charge of organising trade and industrial exhibitions to promote the sale of national products.

Khaldoun Abu Hassan, member of the delegation who returned to Amman Feb. 20, told a Jordan Times Friday that the outcome of the visit was excellent and the ideas put to the leaders of the business communities in the five countries were well received.

"The five Islamic countries we visited are rich in minerals and agriculture, but their industry is now outdated and most of their economies are still linked with the Russian economy, although they are trying to disengage themselves from such linkage," Mr. Abu Hassan said. He added that of these, perhaps Uzbekistan has already succeeded in embarking on a market economy, while the others are striving hard to achieve that point.

He added that the delegation outlined Jordan's achievements and explored fields of cooperation, such as launching joint ventures. Mr. Abu Hassan, who is the president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, said "we have invited officials and businessmen from the five countries to visit the kingdom and familiarise themselves with the achievements realised in industry, agriculture and other sectors; and the leaders of these countries have promised to pay the visits to Jordan possibly

The Jordanian delegation was careful to note that in view of its central geographical location in the Middle East, and in light of its developed business and service sectors, like finance, banking and insurance, the Kingdom is in a position to help and cooperate closely with the Islamic states, Mr. Abu Hassan said. "Although the emphasis was on cooperation with the Islamic countries, we also had talks with leaders in Russia on such matters as cooperating in banking and business in general; but the political situation is not yet clear as the country is struggling to adopt a market economy," Mr. Abu Hassan explained. The delegation visited Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and documents for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Jordan were signed in each republic.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince condole Al Khreisha family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Friday delegated his advisor Mohammad Njadar to convey his condolences to Al Khreisha family over the death of Zeid Mohammad Al Khreisha.

New coins to be issued

AMMAN (Petra) — New coins will be put into circulation by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) as of Monday, March 1, 1992. The CBJ announced that the coins will be of the 10.5, and 2.5 piasters denominations, issued in accordance with the bank's 1992 system No. 28. The new coins will be used in the local market along with the old ones, the CBJ said. On one side of the coins will be a profile photo of His Majesty King Hussein, with the phrase "Al Hussein Ben Talal, the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" written in Arabic. On the other side there will be the denomination written in Arabic and English, the year of issuance and the phrase "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in English.

JNRCS begins assistance distribution

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) has begun distributing in-kind assistance to needy families in various parts of the Kingdom. The assistance includes sugar, rice, flour, fat and clothing. The JNRCS recently distributed gifts, clothing and toys to children attending Al Amal School for the Deaf and Mute in Quwaismah.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed events and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jamal, Helen Khal, Soha Nourst and Afaf Zurayk — at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabal Amman, between the First and Second Circles (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.).
Exhibition of oil paintings by Iraqi artist Mohammad Fakher at the Aladana Art Gallery.
Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artists Mohammad Fawzi and Maher Mejjel at Alia Art Gallery.

3 suspects held in Jabal Amman attack

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police have announced the arrest of three suspects in at least three attacks on shops in Amman this month. It was not known whether the three were also suspected of involvement in a series of attacks in the capital and suburbs since mid-September, but it was believed that the arrests could prove to be a major breakthrough in the investigations.

Brigadier-General Abdullah Hababbeh, chief of police in Amman, said Thursday the arrests came after an attempted robbery of a supermarket in the First Circle area of Jabal Amman Monday evening. The owner of the store, Mohammad Mashaal, was stabbed in the neck by one assailant when he was grappling with another, but the injury was not serious.

Brig. Hababbeh, in an interview with Jordan Television, did not reveal the identity of the

suspects, but said they had confessed to three attacks: A Feb. 15 robbery at a Jabal Amman pharmacy in which they netted JD 110, a Feb. 17 robbery at an Umm Uthaina bookstore in which they got JD 12 and Monday's failed attempt at Mashaal supermarket.

No violence except threats with a weapon was involved in the first two incidents, sources said.

The suspects, described only as "Arab nationals," fled the scene after Monday's aborted supermarket robbery, and police mounted an unprecedented manhunt in the area which lasted more than 36 hours.

Sources said two of the three were detained after a raid in a house in an area popularly known as "Egyptians' street" in Jabal Amman, and the third was arrested in light of information provided by the two.

According to the police statement, the suspects have criminal records.

There was no immediate indication whether the three were

suspects in any other crimes, particularly the series of ill-famous attacks since mid-September.

But the pointed absence of any reference to these incidents in the police statement suggested that the authorities were opting to continue secret investigations. "Police are hoping that interrogation of the three would yield information on the earlier attacks," said one source.

At least nine attacks with common features of physical assault have occurred since Sept. 13. At least two victims died and others suffered serious injuries.

The last attack was two weeks ago, at a bookshop in the Tabor-bour area of northeast Amman.

Early reports said police investigations had found that a blunt instrument — most probably a medium-sized hammer — was used in most attacks, and hence the assailant(s) was nicknamed by the media as "Abu Shakoush (hammerman)".

In an interview with Jordan Television last week, Major-General Fadel Al Fheid revealed

that a hammer was used only in one of the attacks and that forensic tests indicated that other "domestic and professional tools" were used in the other attacks.

Despite the otherwise common features in the incidents, the police chief said, the term "Abu Shakoush" was totally unfounded. He criticised the media for "sensationalising" the news and creating panic among the public.

Gen. Fheid said police had come across significant clues in their investigations, but were not in a position to reveal them lest the criminals benefit from such revelations.

Police sources have said that the possibility remained open that more than one group or person, as well as copycat criminals, could be involved in the attacks.

A main theme in last week's Jordan Television interview with Gen. Fheid was the role of the media in reporting crimes.

Riyad Hroub, chief editor of Shihab weekly, maintained that it was the media's duty to present the facts as they are to the public and said police should release related information to the media.

Gen. Fheid said police were dutybound to maintain silence on criminal investigations until definite facts were established and suspects were arrested, since any premature disclosures could hamper their work and negatively affect the success of their efforts.

In his public comments, Gen. Fheid has repeatedly reminded the Jordanian public that the Kingdom's security forces have a record of solving some of most difficult cases.

"It is only a matter of time before the so-called 'Abu Shakoush' or 'Abu Mismar' (hammerman) cases would be solved," he commented, taking a jab at the media for their handling of the issue.

In the meantime, the police chief advised the public not to panic, but be cautious.

AARDO sets up regional office in Amman

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeisbat and Secretary General of the Afro-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO), Ahmad Khalil Thursday signed an agreement organising the work of the AARDO's Amman-based regional office for the Middle East.

The agreement defines the duties and responsibilities of the office and the commitments of the ministry. Under the agreement, Jordan can benefit from the AARDO's projects in the area of integrated rural development.

The regional office in Amman will make the necessary contacts with AARDO's headquarters to ensure the participation of Jordanians in training courses and seminars held by the organisation and its scholarship programme. The organisation's Amman office will be headed by Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Secretary General Assem Ghosheh.

Jordanian depositors reject 35% offer from BCCI owners in Abu Dhabi

Committee demands full payment of said \$235m involved

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian depositors with the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) in London have rejected an offer by the bank's owners in Abu Dhabi to pay them 35 per cent of their deposits and are now seeking to enlist international support for their bid to secure full payment.

Sources close to the depositors said the offer of a 35 per cent payoff in full settlement of the deposits was not realistic and argued that the owners of the bank, which was sequestered by European monetary authorities in July 1991, were capable of paying in full.

According to the sources, the total amount involved is around \$235 million, the bulk of them in accounts with BCCI branches in London.

One of the sources said that more than half of the depositors were inclined to accept the partial payoff, but the rest were resisting, arguing that depositors in some of the European as well as Middle Eastern countries were paid in full by the owners — the

family of Sheikh Zayed Sultan Al Nahayan, president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and absolute ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

"They (Jordanian depositors) are arguing that their counterparts in France, Spain and other European countries, Yemen and Oman in the Middle East and several countries in the Far East have been paid in full," said one of the sources.

"Their approach is also based on the argument that the ruling family of Abu Dhabi is wealthy enough to return all their deposits," the source added.

Other sources said those rejecting the offer represented only 10 per cent of the depositors.

"There will not be any solution... except through the return in full of our deposits and rights registered with the bank," said an advertisement published in the local press by a committee of the depositors last week after a meeting with the representatives of the owners.

"We... declare that all proposed plans and methods used to conceal the truth will not make us give up our claims for our full rights," it said. "...the reasons

that prompted us to bank (with BCCI) were confidence and belief that the owners of the bank were honourable... wealthy... (and) responsible people who will not do us harm."

"What we hear and see, however, of the people responsible for the liquidation of the bank is so regretful and disgusting after our money was plundered through the latest and most modern means for money management in the financial capitals of the world," it added.

"We appeal to all the responsible governments and organisations to stand by us. We will not give in on our rights..." it pledged.

According to the sources, the announcement by the depositors came after European courts rejected their appeal for full payment of their deposits with BCCI, which is being liquidated by a tribunal appointed by the monetary authorities of Luxembourg, where the bank was based.

The multi-billion dollar collapse of BCCI came after several years of scandals implicating the bank in money-laundering operations and shortchanging governments and depositors. The U.S.

government has initiated a series of cases against former BCCI officials, including its founders.

Many depositors have already received up to \$15,000 under a deposit-guarantee scheme in force in London. But, according to the sources, many Jordanian depositors had hundreds of thousands in foreign currency held in individual accounts with BCCI in London.

The dispute is independent of the operations that BCCI had in Jordan until July 1991, when the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) took over the bank simultaneously with a similar action by the Bank of England, the Luxembourg monetary authorities and others in Europe.

Depositors with BCCI Jordan did not lose any money since all foreign currency holdings of BCCI Jordan had been brought under the control of the CBJ several months before the takeover. The BCCI branches, along with their commercial licences, were sold to a Jordanian institution, the Business Bank, which is now running them as Jordanian banks totally independent of any external affiliations.

Jordan, Australia to build railways

CANBERRA (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour, who is heading the Jordanian team to the talks with their Australian counterparts, said Jordan was trying to benefit from Australia's experiments in processing dairy products and in the production of cereals, adding that Jordan proposed to the Australian team the idea of launching joint ventures.

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construct sheep slaughter houses.

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HUDD puts 342 units on the block

AMMAN (Petra) — Next month, the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) will distribute the housing units of the Batrawi Housing Estate in Zarqa governorate to low income groups, according to an announcement released Friday by Department Director Yousef

Hiyasat.

The 342 new units are of various sizes and cost between JD 11,000 and JD 17,000 each.

Mr. Hiyasat explained that these housing units were originally built for government employees, but some will be sold to the public as well.

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Don't corner the Palestinians

THE DECISION made by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his Russian counterpart Andre Kozirev to go ahead and extend invitations to the Arab and Israeli parties to attend the next round of peace talks in Washington in April suggests that Mr. Christopher's visit to the Middle East was, relatively speaking, successful.

The fact that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin did not endorse Mr. Christopher's proposals over the expulsion of 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon does not seem to taper American optimism over the participation of all the parties in the 10th round of the peace negotiations. This could be explained by the hypothesis that Mr. Rabin's reluctance to accept the new U.S. ideas on the Palestinian exiles may have been motivated by Israeli domestic considerations. Israel's Labour-led government obviously does not want to appear as having buckled under U.S. pressure over an issue that has caused it a lot of embarrassment.

The fact that Mr. Rabin and his government are telling their American allies that they are ready to concentrate on negotiating a deal with Syria suggests that the Israelis want to put more pressure on the Palestinians to accept whatever being offered by the Labour government and sanctioned by the U.S.

Should this Israeli tactic of a Camp-David-like accord with Syria materialise, it will push Palestinian radicalism to its limits and will be a prescription for a new era of conflict and chaos in the region. While Mr. Rabin's predecessor, Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir, intended to go on negotiating with the Palestinians for a decade while changing reality on the ground, Mr. Rabin seems to be intent on pursuing the same ends but with different means.

Nevertheless, should American efforts to bring all the parties back to the negotiating table bear fruit, the thrust of the U.S. "full involvement" should focus on advancing the process on all tracks, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track where the core of the Arab-Israeli dispute lies. It has become a foregone conclusion that unless the Palestinian issue is resolved once and for ever, and for the satisfaction of the Palestinians' national aspirations, peace in the Middle East will not be attained. This is why Mr. Rabin and his government should work for an early return of the exiles and an easing of the harsh conditions that Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza are subjected to. Mr. Rabin himself needs to take the initiative and show goodwill and he will find the Palestinians ready to sit and talk peace.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Friday criticised the United States continued drive to starve the Iraqi people and to condone Israel's atrocities in the occupied Arab lands. It said that dropping food to the people of Bosnia Herzegovina can by no means improve U.S. image because its policies are based on aggression and its history abounds with evidence about American forces making aggression acts against people in Asia, Africa and Latin America. While allowing the Israelis to kill Palestinians fighting for their freedom and maintaining sanctions on Iraqi women and children, the United States claims to be striving to attain peace in the Middle East and continues to invite the Arabs to the negotiating table, said the daily. With a deteriorating economy at home, the United States cannot be in a position to police the world justly and fairly, and with its aggressive attitude towards other nations, it is only bound to win the hatred of other nations, the paper said. The policies adopted by the successive U.S. administration do not reflect wisdom at all, neither do they show that those in power realise that their actions cannot but establish peace and stability in the world, the paper said. To succeed, the United States should not only care about its trade agreements with Japan and Europe, or direct its attention towards looting the oil wealth of the Arab countries, but rather, said the paper, it should recognise the rights of other nations to freedom and real peace and security. The paper said that the current siege on Iraq could cause suffering to the Iraqis but can by no means win the United States any glory.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily commented on the ongoing charity campaign spearheaded by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma. The charity campaign is aimed at raising funds to finance projects for the needy and to collect donations for the poor families of Jordan and there many, said Nazih. The writer said that those who are wealthy and able to extend a helping hand more than others are expected to give more, in line with the teachings of religion. This is a noble mission being implemented by the Queen Alia Fund and one that requires support and active backing by all Jordanians, especially during the month of Ramadan, said the writer. Indeed, it is up to the Jordanian people to see this campaign succeed because the Queen Alia Fund is only a coordinator and organiser of the campaign, arranging for the donations to reach the targeted needy people, continued the writer. He said that this campaign is a trust and a responsibility that should be shouldered by all those who are in a position to extend a helping hand to the needy in our community. Aiming to achieve a noble mission, this campaign relies squarely on the noble attitude and generosity of the Jordanian family, said the writer. He said that the campaign serves as a testing ground to determine the Jordanian society's readiness and capability to enhance social solidarity among their members.

The transitional politics of human rights

Following is an excerpt from an address delivered by Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka to the Association of Nigerian Authors at the end of 1992. Since the delivery of the address, Nigerian presidential elections were postponed until June this year.

THE NEWS is not notably encouraging. The news is, to be candid, a little disheartening. At the last gathering of writers on our own soil at which I was present — the International Conference on African Literature in May 1988 — I made a call to all African dictators to set a date, well before the end of this century, to terminate their existence and restore the right of self-determination to our people. I also called upon my fellow writers to utilise all their skills to bring about this desired socio-political condition for the African polity. Those summonses received a formal boost from the then president of the Organisation of African Unity, General Ibrahim Babangida, at the annual conference of that organisation in June 1991 in Abuja. It was a speech which was quite unprecedented in the gatherings of that mutual admiration club of African rulers.

We know that a democratic order is, by itself, no cast-iron guarantee for the application of fundamental human rights in any society. It is even becoming fashionable to say that it is futile to speak of human rights when people have yet to be assured of two square meals a day in a society that does not lack for resources. That latter statement, apart from its untruthfulness, suggests to me in a rather macabre way that society would be happier if victims of torture were well-nourished rather than skeletal. Or that it would be perfectly acceptable to lock people up in totally darkened cells for 180 days at a stretch — as was the practice in the old South Africa — as long as such prisoners are guaranteed three square meals a day. Let us quit this pointless game of comparative humanism. The ideal society is not achieved by belittling one right of the individual in order to promote another; all rights of society are not addressed within the same breath; and a division of labour is the strategy of social responsibility. And it is from within this holistic awareness that we also insist that, while democracy does not absolutely guarantee the ideal condition of fundamental human rights, it is a rational, time-tested foundation on which we can begin to erect a superstructure of those rights.

When I utter pessimistic sounds about progress within the democratic agenda since my exhortation of May 1988, I do, of course, acknowledge some progress on certain fronts, including even apartheid South Africa. Nevertheless, we cannot fail to note the continued desperation of resistance in a number of sister nations, including fraudulent cosmetic changes or propositions which make a mockery of our true destination. What is more — and this is what concerns us —

the seemingly or temporarily successful strategy of stalling the process, adopted by the obstinate few, serves to encourage backsliding motions even among those dictatorial regimes that have been compelled, by popular movements, to undertake a practical response to these demands.

Who, for instance, can dismiss outright the speculation that the successful instance of Burkina Faso has served as a model for the fraudulent conversion of power devised by Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in order to rob the Ghanaian people yet again of their right to an authentic self-determination? In this contemptuous act of public deception undertaken by a power-hungry individual, we can only wish the Ghanaian people the necessary courage in putting a definitive check on this truly tiresome propensity of African leaders for self-perpetuation in power.

Can we doubt also that the machinations of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, and Mr. Eyadéma's murderous manipulation of an ethnic-based army (in Togo) in the project of self-perpetuation do not feed on each other for sustenance? Again, we must express our solidarity with the Togolese masses in their contestation of the continued treachery of their armed minority. The weapon of mass strikes and the paralysis of state machinery is a weapon in which we must take more than neighbourly interest; we never know when it might be our turn to employ similar tactics. Let us not fail to parallel also Houphouët-Boigny's delusion of grandeur (in the Côte d'Ivoire) with Hastings Banda's own delusion of immortality (in Malawi), providing us the pathetic spectacle of two senile octogenarians clinging desperately to the cliff-edge of power on arthritic finger-tips. The prisons of Malawi only temporarily inure the bodies of the propensities of freedom; their spirit is at liberty, and that spirit will shortly sweep Malawi into the widening democratic league that already embraces Zambia, the Republic of Congo, and Namibia, and has shaken the once impregnable ramparts of apartheid South Africa.

Delusions of grandeur, or power, are not, alas, confined to the aged and senile. Mr. Strasser of Sierra Leone is already exhibiting the banal symptoms. And on our home front (Nigeria) we have recently undergone a variety of assaults on our fragile democratic initiatives by individuals with uncommonly high levels self-regard. Where this delusion is most highly concentrated, what we have witnessed is a nearly single-handed subversion of the democratic machinery, the purchase of so-called power-brokers — in reality mere mobsters, enforcers and thugs — recruited through agents the length and breadth of the country; we have witnessed the purchase of returning officers, state legislators, local government party chairmen, traditional rulers and, yes, even elected governors, who then convert the machinery of state to the personal service of one individual, marching to the sweet



Wole Soyinka: While Democracy does not absolutely guarantee the ideal conditions of fundamental human rights, it is a rational, time-tested foundation on which we can begin to erect a superstructure of those rights.

naïra notes from a muted martial bangle.

Our tools, as writers, are words, and if I appear to have stated the obvious, I shall extend this further by stating that, as users of words primarily, it is only natural that we are more responsive, perhaps even over-responsive, to the nuances or sub-texts of the choices of public expression than the ordinary individual. The foregoing is to situate why I was recently startled by the contrast provided by two public expressions of the same objective, and reminded that there has been a promotion of certain dangerous tendencies in governance which we have wrongly designated as trivial. While we may dismiss certain foibles related to the podium of power as mere aberrations that will disappear with the termination of a particular regime, we would be shirking our responsibility if, on discovering that we are being brainwashed into accepting such abnormalities as the norm, we do not immediately call attention to them. This is how traditions are established, even of the unsavoury kind. We dare not wait until our new democratic replacements and their appendages adopt what, in effect, are abuses of the government process. We have to let them know, now, that such conduct will not be tolerated. The time to place them on notice is now.

This nation is weary of arbitrary interventions in people's daily existence; it is ready for a civic revolt, even with all its own pitfalls, human failings and uncer-

tain prospects.

We must spend a little more time on the military caste — and its human accretions — from whose control we insist our destiny must be wrested. Nigerians forget easily. Or perhaps we should put it this way — the reaction of the average Nigerian to any challenging or unsettling event even suggests a failure to connect such an event to similar occurrences in the past, even as a homologue. Such recollection is bound to qualify, in a reasoned way, what would otherwise be a blind instinctual response to the immediate event. We know that we do recall events which provoked a similar burt, a similar resentment, a similar state of rage, but, usually, only when the perpetrators of the new assault are the same as before, since this further propels us into the vengeful, emotive mode of response. This trait must be brought to the attention of the editorialists, the media commentators, those who should charge themselves against over-reaction. A reaction which further compounds one's injury surely ends up awarding victory to the aggressor.

Opera Woyosi was written over 15 years ago. Those whose memory needs jogging should recall that play. It catalogues the atrocities committed on the Nigerian populace by the army. I recall that when it was first staged at the University of Ife at Convo-cation, a military governor who was a special guest was so outraged that he wanted to walk out and then institute action against

the university — and myself of course — for such a denigration of the army's image. As the play proceeded, however, according to his own testimony he began to ask himself questions, and he ended up admitting to himself that the play depicted the truth. He said, "I began to feel ashamed of my uniform."

I don't know if he was the one who took news of the performance to the then head of state, because that very head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo, spoke to me about it in his usual memorable manner. He wanted us to give a command performance to which he would order his officers from all over the country, including the sergeant-majors. He felt it would do them a lot of good to be made to confront how they were perceived by other members of society. Then he added, "of course, you realise that after the show, I will lock all of you up, the writer, director, the actors, even the most junior stagehand."

It is a national tragedy, and a dark foreboding for our democratic future, that, 15 years after Opera Woyosi, the army should not only abound and incarcerate a number of policemen, but that a government spokesman should dare insult public intelligence by suggesting that the army had abducted a senior police officer and kept him away from his office and his family for 45 days "for his own safety". And anyone who believes that it was yet another coincidence that the inspector-general of police ordered his men back on the beat after the release of the senior police officer, must be an alien to this Nigerian soil, indeed to the entire African continent. There is no question, not one iota of doubt in my mind, that the police withdrew their men, either through indirectly transmitted, unofficial directives, or else permitted their men to remain off-duty in that same "deconstructed" style that the army spokesman employed, looking the other way while they stayed off duty until their kidnapped colleagues were released. What this means is that we, the public, were placed in double jeopardy by the failure of the army to discipline its men. And, of course, we, the public, must accept that we were also in part contributors to our own fate, since we failed to condemn the army's action.

The lesson that I wish to impress on everyone is the general loss to every section of the public. The mystique of esprit de corps, especially where one esprit de corps ranges itself against another, is costly, irrational and unpatriotic. While the two groups themselves suffer casualties in the process, it is the defenceless public which pays the dearest penalty. The recent kidnapping of the policemen shows clearly that the army has yet to purge itself of its tendency towards organised outlawry. By that kidnapping they assigned our fate to the hands of that no longer shadowy, third esprit de corps which they had taken for granted — that of organised violent crime. The army must be told that after the police killed one of theirs, they, the

army, then proceeded to create the circumstances for the gunning down of two more from their own ranks, plus an unknown number of civilians, the highest in any month that this country has ever known.

We, as writers, have a duty to remind the public, to which we belong, of our own culpability in authenticating one of two faces of a counterfeit coin. We must ensure that we are not sucked so easily into illusory triumphs which dislodge our real interests. It is time that the public developed and imposed on national consciousness a comprehensive esprit de corps, one that serves all sectors of the community, not one that excludes, or privileges, one sector at the expense of others.

And that same example must serve as our guide in the drive to take the military out of our political existence and ensure that they remain outside it, permanently. If we fail to absorb the lesson of the (recent past) in its fullness, we shall yet again fall into the trap of crowding over the self-destruction of our erstwhile presidential aspirants, and thereby reverse ourselves in our democratic undertaking. I have already heard the refrain in many unexpected quarters — let the army stay on, the civilians have proved that they have learnt nothing, the new breed is the old breed except in subtlety, Babangida should not go ... and so on ad infinitum. While rightly blaming the politicians for the recent electoral debacle, the same opinions obscure the fact that the entire transition programme was the work and the responsibility of the army in government. The duration, the parties, the constitution, the manifestoes, the changes upon changes and reverses of gear to various starting points, the decision on open balloting, the erstwhile pariah moneybags translated into cash-tankers ... every detail and consequence, including even the existence of the telegraphic chairman of the NEC, all was the handiwork of this military régime. So how can the failure of such a multi-billion naïra project — no expense spared — be used as a justification for prolonging the stay of the army?

What is at stake here is more than the credibility of the army as perceived by the public; it is also a question of future trust between the many interest groups which make up the nation, the army included. The army's incursion into our political fortunes has not been without its achievements, and a sense of decency, of fair dealing, demands that all such should be acknowledged. Indeed, I would go further and assert it as a fundamental right of the army in government that its attainments be objectively assessed and acknowledged. That, however, can only be after it has fulfilled its pledge to the nation in every particular, not as variable evidence of goodwill but of solemn patriotic duty. And on that note, I suggest that we leave them alone to prepare in orderly fashion the final leg of their farewell undertaking: Jan. 2, 1993 is, after all, only a very short haul away.

Uncertainty engulfs Quebec's future

By Deborah Charley
Reuter

The resignation of Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney could add fuel to the separatist movement in Quebec as the French-speaking province loses a strong ally in Ottawa.

Mr. Mulroney, a bilingual Quebecer of Irish descent, has always had a unique relationship with Quebec despite being one of Canada's most unpopular leaders to date due in part to a controversial seven per cent value-added tax and double-digit unemployment.

Mr. Mulroney — who resigned as conservative leader on Wednesday — may not have been liked all the time, but he is a "son of Quebec" who worked hard to solve the differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada. "Quebec loses an ally," headlined the editorial page of Quebec's Le Soleil newspaper on Thursday. Editorial page Editor Michel Audet credited Mr. Mulroney with "modifying the traditional political alliances in Quebec."

Mr. Mulroney forged a close relationship with liberal Quebec premier Robert Bourassa — one of the province's strongest supporters of Quebec's staying within Canada.

But the future is uncertain for Mr. Bourassa, who has been sidelined with a recurrence of cancer and who says he will make a decision on his political future after he sees how his body reacts to experimental cancer treatments.

Mr. Mulroney's resignation, coupled with Mr. Bourassa's illness and rumours that he too may step down, has added to the uncertainty of Quebec's future.

Claude Ryan, a senior Quebec minister and another staunch supporter of Quebec's staying within Canada, said the province has lost a "tremendous voice" with Mr. Mulroney's resignation, adding that federalism is in trouble in Quebec without a credible voice in Ottawa.

"Canadian federalism is in very difficult shape at the moment," Mr. Ryan told reporters. "How is it going to be handled in the future? I don't know. There is great instability."

The separatist, opposition Quebecois said it sees Mr. Mulroney's resignation as a boon to the federal pro-separatist bloc Quebecois.

For all but one of the last 25 years, Canada has been run by a bilingual Quebecer, and analysts have traditionally held that elections are won or lost in Quebec.

Most of the leading contenders to head up the Conservative Party are not from Quebec, a fact which could alter the relationship between the province — which asserts its rights as a distinct society with a different culture from that of English-speaking Canada — and the rest of the country.

Parti Quebecois leader Jacques Parizeau has already set out a long-term plan for the party that will lead to "sovereignty" — political separation with continued economic links — for Quebec by 1995.

Clinton: the politics of caution

BY Jim Wolf
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The planned U.S. air drop over Bosnia marks a cautious foreign debut for President Bill Clinton, clearly eager to avoid escalation into a major entanglement abroad.

In announcing plans to drop relief supplies from high altitudes, the White House, took pains to describe it as a humanitarian mission that would benefit all sides in the Balkan conflict and not lead to deeper U.S. involvement there.

"These airdrops are being carried out strictly for humanitarian purposes. No combat aircraft will be used in this operation," Mr. Clinton has said.

It would be a "great mistake" to read the operation as "some initial foray toward a wider military role," he said during a recent joint press conference with British Prime Minister John Major.

The deliveries, from as high as 3,000 metres to avoid ground fire, were "not a political issue with us" and would help anybody who needs the food and medicine," Mr. Clinton added.

That represented a significant shift in rhetoric about an operation initially cast as a reply to Serb efforts to starve Bosnian Muslims into submission.

In denying any political agenda and carefully lining up allied support, Mr. Clinton was trying to avoid, among other things, encouraging Serbian forces, potentially capable of shooting down a U.S. cargo plane and forcing U.S. escalation.

But the Serbs, widely branded by the West as the principal culprits, are not the only ones who could turn Bosnia into a foreign-policy nightmare for the



new administration.

In fact, Serbs seem to fear that desperate Bosnian Muslims might themselves down a U.S. aircraft in hopes Washington would blame the Serbs and enter the conflict to punish them.

Retired army Lieutenant-General Williams Odom, head of National Security Studies at the Private Hudson Institute, said Mr. Clinton's caution could backfire if it led to escalation of ethnic warfare that spilled across European borders.

"The thing gets out of control as you go up the ladder a small rung at a time, Mr. Odom, who headed the U.S. National Security Agency from 1983 to 1988, said in a telephone interview.

If it was in U.S. interests to intervene, Mr. Clinton would do better to go in with 10 NATO divisions, one or two Russian divisions, plus a Ukrainian division, to quell fighting that might otherwise grow to involve Greece, Turkey, Albania and Bulgaria, he said.

A force of that size might have to stay as long as 20 years throughout most of the former

Yugoslavia "while the locals come to terms and create a government that they can live with," Mr. Odom said.

"That's going to the top rung of the ladder," he said, "not screwing around with a few food deliveries."

But Mr. Clinton, who has said he planned to focus "like a laser" on the American economy, may have concluded putting U.S. ground forces into Bosnia held the potential for another Vietnam-style quagmire.

Melvin Goodman, who analysed international issues for the Central Intelligence Agency for 20 years and is now a professor of international relations at the U.S. National War College, said previous presidents had erred by attempting early military adventures before their administrations were acting in harmony.

He cited John Kennedy and the disastrous 1961 Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion, Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam and Gerald Ford and the costly bid to rescue Americans on the freighter Mayaguez off Cambodia in 1975.

"I will give Clinton a certain amount of credit. This is a mistake he's trying to avoid," Mr. Goodman said, adding Mr. Clinton was using "incredible caution" in ordering the high-altitude airlift to avoid shoot-down over Bosnia.

"The only thing you can be sure, from 10,000 feet, is that the supplies will indeed land on earth," he said, citing the comment of a U.S. air force pilot.

Mr. Clinton may also be especially prone to caution because of the timely reminder from Somalia, where a number of Somali were shot and possibly killed by U.S. troops during riots in Mogadishu in the past weeks.

The violence was the worst since December when then-President George Bush launched the U.S.-led humanitarian effort to quell clan warfare to relief agencies could help starving Somalis.

The flare-up, after two months of relative calm, raised new questions about whether U.S. forces would be able to restore order quickly, as they had planned, and hand over their peace-keeping duties to a U.N. contingent.

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Syria to convene Arab meeting

(Continued from page 1)

415 Palestinians from the occupied territories. Mr. Christopher is now gambling that Arabs, including the Palestinians, would be ready to return to the talks before all the evictees were returned to their homes.

Mr. Christopher said he had not asked and did not receive an assurance from Mr. Sharaa that Syria would attend the April talks. The assurance he did receive was apparently a more general commitment to work for the resumption of the peace process.

Mr. Christopher said he had been encouraged by the reaction to the decision to issue invitations.

"I continue to feel optimistic. I'm encouraged by developments since yesterday when the announcement was made," he said.

Mr. Christopher said Sharaa had repeated that he attached the highest value to reconvening the peace talks and had said he was pleased the invitations had been issued for April.

Mr. Sharaa said in a newspaper interview published Friday the United States must back implementation of a U.N. resolution urging the return of the evictees.

But he said Syria, a key player in the peace process, had not linked that issue to Syrian participation in the talks.

In his interview with the French newspaper Le Figaro, Mr. Sharaa said he was disappointed that Syria would not participate in the negotiations with Israel without waiting for them to have "no foundation."

"We want a global settlement," Mr. Sharaa said. "If we had wanted a separate peace, we could have done it years ago. If more attention is paid to the Syrian-Israeli negotiations than to the others, that is because there can be no peace without Syria."

"All I can say at the present time is we feel confident enough about the situation to have indicated that we think the next round of these negotiations should commence in April," Mr. Christopher told a joint news conference after meeting Mr. Kozirev.

"We felt there were enough positive signs to have made the statement."

A U.S. official said Mr. Christopher decided to propose the idea to Mr. Kozirev after late night contacts Wednesday with parties to the negotiations.

Mr. Christopher said several of the leaders he met in the Middle East stressed the importance of resuming talks quickly.

"This is a historic moment. I was surprised by the number of countries, the number of leaders, who told me in the Middle East that they think it's a one-off opportunity for peace," he said. "And they want to grasp the moment."

"The U.S.-Russian move put intense pressure on Palestinian negotiators to attend the talks even if their demand for the immediate return of the expelled Palestinians was not met."

Adding to the pressure on the Palestinians, President Bill Clinton sent a letter to East Jerusalem leader Faisal Husseini which spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi described as "positive and encouraging."

Mr. Kozirev said Russia would hold talks with Palestinian leaders in Moscow within the next few days to try to persuade them to attend the talks and to fix a specific date.

In occupied Jerusalem, the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, Haidar Abdul Shafi, said the invitation was premature

because there was still no solution to the evictees problem.

Dr. Abdul Shafi told Israeli army radio that invitations would be "a little premature because the American administration still hasn't responded to the Palestinian requirements."

He indicated Israel had not accepted two key Palestinian demands, for it to repatriate the nearly 400 expellees and to pledge not to expel more Palestinians.

Spokeswoman Ashrawi said they had received two "encouraging" letters each from President Clinton and from Mr. Christopher Thursday, but that their messages fell short of resolving the crisis.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said the expulsion of the 400 Palestinians was an exception to government policy, but the government has not made any statement renouncing the practice of expulsion.

In a speech Thursday, Mr. Rabin defended the practice, even as he gave an upbeat assessment of the peace process.

"We are ready to make compromises for peace. But we are not ready for compromises in the war against terror," he said.

Speaking of prospects for peace, Mr. Rabin said, "It is very likely that this next year will be one of the most fateful and important in the history of the state of Israel" and that the Jewish state would face difficult decisions.

"There is a chance that 45 years of war will come to an end, that perhaps there will be an end to the blood and tears," Mr. Rabin said. "It doesn't only depend on us or our wishes, but we as a government and a state can and will make our contribution."

The Maariv newspaper reported, meanwhile, that Israel offered a compromise to the Palestinians in which it would immediately repatriate up to 30 more of the expellees.

It already offered to bring back 101 now and the rest by the end of the year. But the evictees and the Palestinian delegates insisted all the men be returned immediately and without conditions in line with a U.N. Security Council resolution.

Another newspaper, Hadassot, said Israel also offered to allow back dozens of PLO supporters expelled in past years. Both proposals were reportedly made to Mr. Christopher in his talks in Israel Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mr. Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben Ari declined comment on the reports.

In Tunis, the PLO said that invitations to a new round of peace talks were "premature" but added that it welcomed U.S. proposals to resolve the evictee crisis.

PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo told Reuters that invitations to resume the talks in April were "premature and that the Palestinian participation was pending to the commitment to the U.S. proposals and the solution of the deportees issue."

The PLO says Israel has rejected a U.S. plan to speed the return home of the evictees.

"We sent an urgent letter to Warren Christopher on Wednesday night telling him the PLO welcomes these proposals. But when they saw that the Palestinian position was positive, the Israelis came on Thursday morning and asked for amendments which are basically a retraction from all the proposals," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

'Russia's inheritance of the Soviet Union is illegal'

By Farouq Tobulat

On Oct. 25, 1917, the Bolsheviks carried out a coup; on Oct. 26, 1917, the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, in a unilateral decision, without consulting the people inhabiting the Russian empire, formed the Russian government, the Council of Peoples' Commissars.

The resolution of the first Soviet Congress on "federal establishment of the Russian Republic" on Jan. 15, 1918, adopted unilaterally and without consulting national peculiarities and peoples' volition, pointed out that the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was founded on the basis of a voluntary union of Russians as a federation of ex-Soviet republics, but there is no corresponding agreement or treaty signed by these people's representatives.

On July 1, 1918, the constitution of the Russian Federation was adopted; in it is a constitution that does not take into account the national republics' volition and does not mention who the federation's subjects are and who founded it.

The treaty on forming the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was signed by the Russian Federation on behalf of all the peoples inhabiting the Russian empire.

In June 1990, the RSFSR, adopted the declaration of sovereignty, which proclaimed the superiority of Russia's legislation over the legislation of the USSR. It was the first step on the way of destroying the united state — the USSR.

On Dec. 8, 1991, the leaders of the Russian Federation, the Ukraine and Byelorussia concluded the agreement on forming the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which announced the abolition of the USSR. Consequently, the USSR stopped existing as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality, as the treaty points out.

This decision was illegal because, according to the points of the agreement on forming the USSR in 1922, the subjects of the union could only denounce the treaty (i.e. leave the Union), but not abolish it.

On Dec. 21, 1991, the Alma-Ata Summit of the former Soviet

Union heads of republics took place. Eight more republics joined the agreement.

It was decided in Alma-Ata that other republics of the USSR should support Russia as the union's successor. Specifically, they should acknowledge Russia's right to substitute the Soviet Union at the U.N. Security Council. Since some union republics which signed the agreement or joined it were illegal, such as the republics of Moldavia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and others which were formed according to the USSR's laws and did not exist as independent states before, the Alma-Ata meeting violates all legal norms and Russia has no legal grounds for membership in the U.N. and its bodies, especially the Security Council, as the USSR successor state.

Russia and other CIS founders rudely deprived their citizens of USSR citizenship which legally meant an automatic loss of their citizenship because, according to Article 16 of the law on citizenship in the USSR of Dec. 1, 1978, the loss of the USSR citizenship is followed by the loss of a union republic's citizenship.

It follows that any changes of the state system or relations between the parties who had signed the agreement on founding the CIS with other states and international organizations are illegal as are any acts adopted by these states before adopting a national legislation on citizenship.

After changing the legal status of the RSFSR, no referendum or new elections to the supreme bodies of legislation were held, let alone adopting the new constitution.

So the above analysis of the existing documents brings us to the following:

1. Founding the RSFSR as a federative state was illegal because there was neither peoples' volition nor legal documents signed.
2. Russia's inheriting the former USSR's rights and its presence in the U.N. Security Council is illegal.
3. The cancellation of the USSR and foundation of the CIS is illegal.

The writer is head of the Information Bureau and official spokesman of the Chechen Republic in Jordan and in the Middle East.

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Thinker urges Islamic 'cultural revolution'

By Katia Sabat

CAIRO — A new cultural revolution is needed in the Arab countries where Islamic fundamentalism is a growing problem. That is the verdict of Egyptian-born Dr. Rouchdi Fakkar, humanist, sociologist and one of the Arab World's great contemporary thinkers.

The best way to combat Islamic extremism is not by sending in the troops, says Dr. Fakkar, but by teaching the people — and especially the younger generation — that the true Islamic religion has nothing to do with violence or terror tactics.

"These young terrorists, these children who are being manipulated, they need to be trained and educated," said Dr. Fakkar. "I would wish for a cultural and educational revolution in all the Muslim countries."

In an interview, he talked of his sadness at the way Islam's real nature has been distorted by religious reactionaries. And he launched a proposal for a campaign to restore the human face of the Islamic faith. "I am proud to be a Muslim. I am proud of Islam, but of an Islam that is reconciliatory and willing to open up to other religions," said Dr. Fakkar. "Islam must find its place once again in our society, as many right-thinking people want it to, but we must begin at the beginning... You can't have Islam without the Muslims."

At the heart of the problem, says the Egyptian sociologist, is an ever-widening gap between the true teachings of the Islamic religion and the distorted version that some sectors have created for their own political ends. "It is said today to see a prefabricated Islam that each person has designed to suit his own needs," said Dr. Fakkar. "Some people seem to believe they have the monopoly on the Islamic faith. In fact, Islam is quite simply a ques-

tion of living according to the rules of Islam. A person who steals, tricks, kills and fornicates is living outside the realm of Islam."

The 64-year-old intellectual, one of the most highly regarded minds in the Islamic World, was born in Karnak in southern Egypt. After graduating from the University of Al Azhar, he went on to teach in several major European seats of learning, including the Sorbonne and the University of Geneva. Specializing in pre-Marxist sociology and socialism, Dr. Fakkar's studies also cover social anthropology, cultural relations and psychology. He has worked for UNESCO and published around 50 books, articles and essays. Founder of the Institute of Sociology in Morocco, it is there that he now lives, with his wife and two children.

Dr. Fakkar's views are wide-ranging, and he rejects narrow interpretations of religion and race. For a time, he worked with Georges Gurvitch, a Russian-born Jew and renowned sociologist whom Dr. Fakkar describes as a "genius in his field." "One must be objective," said Dr. Fakkar. "The Jews have made great contributions to progress in all the fields of culture and science. Having said that, let us not forget that there is a category of Jew who is chauvinist and racist, completely closed to the outside world. These are the real enemies, not just to Arabs, but to other Jews and to Judaism in general. One cannot take them as an example by which to judge an entire people."

According to Dr. Fakkar, dialogue is the only real hope for a narrowing of the gap between the Muslim World and the West. "I believe that democracy is slowly making headway almost everywhere in the Arab World, even if it only takes the form of the traditional Islamic consultative councils. The days of the dicta-

torships are over. I believe there is a hope that the type of dialogue I propose will soon be a reality. In the face of a certain mistrust for the word democracy on the part of some Islamicists, Dr. Fakkar recommends a reworking of the terminology. "We must try to create a bridge, a kind of beach-head of understanding between the western terminology and the terminology of the Arab and Muslim civilisation," he said.

Recent scenes of terrorist violence in Egypt, which have seen young adolescents attacking busloads of foreign tourists, are the product of a complex cocktail of factors, says the sociologist. "It is a mistake to try to give just one single explanation of these events," he said. "On the contrary, there are so many contributing factors that it is not easy to bring them all together and to analyse them... That is why, as a sociologist, I hope that repression will be used only as a last resort, when all the other methods have failed, when dialogue has become impossible and when there is no longer any room for negotiation."

The cultural revolution which Dr. Fakkar so strongly advocates should be entrusted to an international group of independent Islamic thinkers, he explained. "Governments cannot and should not play the leading role in every

field. A government cannot be responsible for every aspect — economic, social, political and religious matters as well. Why not redistribute the responsibilities? The Islamic thinkers should take responsibility for an area of work which belongs to them," he said. "Iran is trying to usurp, this role, and that is our fault. We have rather neglected the spiritual and cultural aspect of our religion."

In answer to critics who have levelled accusations of authoritarian rule against the Moroccan government, the Egyptian sociologist repeats his warnings of the danger of trying to force western values and interpretations on the Islamic World. "One should not confuse democracy in Europe — where public opinion is already well informed — with what the governments of other countries may be capable of achieving and want to achieve," said Dr. Fakkar. "We have seen where democracy has led people who were not yet ready to take on this kind of freedom. One need look no further than Algeria. Every people should be governed according to a formula which corresponds to its cultural level, its customs and traditions, and to its degree of openness to the outside world. It is a grave mistake to suggest that there is just one type of democracy in this world" — World News Link.

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Group urges Hamas

(Continued from page 1)

operative as a party during the month of Ramadan, West Bank organisers say.

The Tunis-based DFLP wing agreed to represent FIDA in the PLO Executive Committee, the Palestine Central Council (PCC) and the PNC. While Mr. Abed Rabbo is not the head of the party he will represent the party's interests outside the occupied territories along with other DFLP officials belonging to his branch of the party.

"We, as a group have always chosen the 'realistic' way, the way of cohabitation and mutual recognition," said Friday's statement. "We chose to de-centralise while others were centralising the statement said."

"Our merger with FIDA shows that we are taking the decision-making powers and the lead-

ership back to the occupied territories and will not hold on to it regardless of the consequences," DFLP activist Mamdouh Nofal told the Jordan Times.

The statement made no mention of the other DFLP members in Tunis or their politics. The group called on Israel to immediately return the Palestinian expellees stranded in South Lebanon, and apply U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

"We call on our Arab brothers to coordinate our efforts to accomplish a total Arab-Israeli peace and not a partial, fractured one — a land for peace formula," said the statement.

"The intifada must continue till peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is achieved and until the occupation of the Palestinian lands ends," it said.

Hamas leaders meet Western envoys

(Continued from page 1)

turned down. But the delegation negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians in the Middle East peace talks is controlled by the PLO.

"Under the circumstances, resumption of the dialogue with the PLO will reflect positively on the

peace process," Mr. Abu Sharif said.

Mr. Nazzari said: "Our main goal was to explain our political charter, to make it clear to the Americans that Hamas is not a terrorist group, but a group striving for liberating Palestinian lands from occupation."

Al Ahli boycott All-Star tournament

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Almost all the Kingdom's First Division basketball players will be competing in Jordan's second All-Star basketball tournament which begins Tuesday March 3 at Al Orthodoxy's court.

The exception will be the players of one of Jordan's two basketball powerhouses — Al Ahli — whose board Thursday announced that players of their First Division basketball team would boycott the All-Star tournament until the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) seriously looks into and decides upon their disputed First Division match against Al Orthodoxy.

The disputed match of Jan. 26 was won by Al Orthodoxy, but Al Ahli has since protested to the JBF and the Ministry of Youth citing "obvious mismanagement by the referees" which led to their 84-81 loss of the match and the 1992 title. The controversy has not yet been resolved as the JBF stumbled while trying to solve the

biggest controversy that has hit the federation. The Ministry of Youth then advised the forming of a fact-finding committee to probe the matter and provide a solution that would somehow please all concerned.

The ministry's secretary-general, Eid Al Fayez, had announced the forming of the committee on Feb. 10, affirming that its decision would be final and binding to all.

No decision has yet been announced, although the committee met with boards of both clubs in the past days.

Al Ahli board member and spokesman Samir Janakat, told the Jordan Times that the club's under-22 players will be taking part in the All-Star tournament "as that would serve the best interests of the under-22 national team" which is now preparing to take part in the Asian Youth Basketball Championship in Hong Kong in April.

Participating players in the All-Star competition have been divided to five teams bearing the names of their sponsors. They are Toyota,

Mercedes, Mitsubishi, Hyundai and Daihatsu.

The teams will be coached by Mohammad Al Najjar, Ibrahim Al Ja'fari, Ghaidh Al Najjar, Fadi Al Sabbah and the JBF's Russian coach for the Daihatsu team which will group the under-22 team.

The Toyota team includes Murad Barakat, Samir Murqus, Asim Al Samman and Maher Zubdi, Hilal Barakat, Marwan Ma'touq, Vicken Avakian and Khaled Abu Namous will be playing in the Mercedes team. Walid Badran, Nadin Al Nahhas, Raed Al Haj and Arar Al Khalaf are in the Mitsubishi team, while the Hyundai team includes Jihad Saliba, Jamal Bubeiri, Naser Bushnaq and Jan Sahleib. The Daihatsu "under-22" team includes Muntaser Albutayeb, Ghaidh Ennabi, Raed Jaber, Mohammad Al Shammali and Ziyad Al Nabulsi.

In the first match of the tournament Hyundai play Mitsubishi Wednesday. The tournament will run up to March 22.

Littbarski faces difficult days

BONN (R) — Pierre Littbarski, the most entertaining German footballer of the past decade, is finding his last days in the Bundesliga the toughest of his career.

Littbarski played in three World Cup final tournaments, featuring in the triumph of 1990 after West Germany had finished runners-up in 1982 and 1986.

But the 32-year-old midfielder, whose dribbling skills and cheerful personality have always pleased the crowds, has had to put up with his share of bad times in his 15 years in the game.

And the footballing life is particularly tricky for Littbarski just now.

Despite his immense experience Littbarski, who was dropped from the national team when Berti Vogts took over as coach from Franz Beckenbauer after the 1990 World Cup, is struggling to get into the first team at relegation-threatened Cologne.

The Rhine club's battle to avoid the drop has also endangered Littbarski's hopes of ending his career with a lucrative contract with Jr. East Furlkawa Football Club in the new Japanese League.

The Berlin-born player, whose recent problems have been dragged through the popular press, admits life has not been easy in the twilight of his career.

"Some journalists in Germany seem to enjoy writing off famous players when their performance



One of Germany's most popular players, Pierre Littbarski (right) rejoices after scoring a goal for the German national team.

are not that good," he said. "They put the boot in at the end of their careers. Toni Schumacher and Paul Breitner had the same experience."

Littbarski's ability to motivate his team mates has always been a major bonus at national and international level. His humour off the pitch was important in keeping up team morale during the 1990 World Cup campaign.

But in the last few months he has been in the bad books at Cologne, who are more used to fighting for the title then relegation.

Last November Littbarski, capped 73 times, was heavily fined by the club after he left a pre-match training camp without permission and was involved in a motorway accident.

Littbarski could make \$1.26 million a year by joining England's former international Gary Lineker in the inaugural J-League. The German knows the contract would be his last chance for a top-class deal before he retires.

Japanese officials are due to visit Cologne March 1 to negotiate the deal.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Wembley backs match for Moore memorial

LONDON (R) — Wembley Stadium may stage a match later this year between England and a star-studded rest of the world team in memory of Bobby Moore. Wembley chairman Sir Brian Wolfson Thursday gave permission for the use of the stadium — the scene of Moore's greatest triumph as a player when he led England to World Cup victory in 1966. Franz Beckenbauer, who captained the West German team which lost the match to England, has already indicated he is willing to take part. Pele, another great name, is also being lined up. The death of the 51-year-old Moore Wednesday, after a two-year battle against cancer, shocked the soccer world. The West Ham Club, where he spent most of his playing days, turned into a shrine Thursday as hundreds of mourning fans went to the ground to pay homage to their hero.

Orthez reach last 8 in Eurobasketball

LONDON (R) — French club Orthez reached the last eight of the European Clubs' Championship at the fourth attempt in recent weeks when they beat Treviso of Italy 82-55 in Pau Thursday. Orthez had lost their last three matches in Group B, any of which would have given them a berth into the quarter-finals, but finally came good in a game which was harder fought than the score suggests. American Clinton Wheeler scored 28 points to lead Bayer Leverkusen to a well-deserved 92-80 victory over Estudiantes Madrid in Group B. Real Madrid wound up with a fine 105-76 success over Zadar to finish on top of the group with 26 points. Olympiakos secured their passage to the last eight with an 85-66 win over Mechelen. Paok Salonika finished top of Group A with an easy 81-67 home victory over Cibona Zagreb. Limoges (France) also progress to the last eight along with Italians Pesaro and Bologna.

Pistons trade Woolridge, keep Rodman

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (AP) — The Detroit Pistons kept Dennis Rodman and instead released Orlando Woolridge. There had been talk all week that the Pistons were trying to trade the fickle Rodman. They traded Woolridge to the Milwaukee Bucks for Alvin Robertson just minutes before the trading deadline of 9 p.m. EST (2000 GMT). Rodman, the NBA's leading rebounder, is defensive player in the League.

Higueta relieves World Cup nightmare

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Rene Higuita, Colombia's unorthodox goalkeeper, relieved his World Cup nightmare in the Libertadores cup this week. Playing for his club Atletico Nacional of Colombia against Flamengo, Higuita attempted to dribble past Flamengo forward Renato in front of his own goal, lost control of the ball and banded Renato one of the easiest goals of his career. It gave the Brazilian champions a 1-0 win as they became the first foreign team to triumph in Atletico's Stadium since 1975. Higuita was jeered off the field by home fans. Higuita's blunder was all too reminiscent of the goal which knocked Colombia out of the 1990 World Cup, when he lost the ball to Roger Milla in midfield, allowing the Cameroon forward to gleefully score his team's winner.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMAR HIRSCH
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COUNTED OUT

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ K Q 10
♥ J 5 2
♦ Q J 3
♣ A 5 4 2

SOUTH
♠ A J 3
♥ A K Q
♦ A K 9
♣ Q J 10 8

The bidding:
South West North East
3 NT Pass 7 NT Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♣

It's never pleasant to land in a grand slam which depends on a finesse. Even worse is when the cause is an invidious overbid, and it becomes calamitous when the perpetrator also underplays the hand.

North-South were using a range of 26-27 for an opening bid of three no trump, so South was one point short. Not much, but just enough to cause a problem when North, looking at 13 points, bounced right into a grand slam.

West led a heart and declarer could count only 10 fast tricks. The missing three tricks would have to come from clubs, a suit in which declarer was missing the king. Rather than delay matters, declarer decided that, after winning the heart lead, it was time to plunk down the queen of clubs. When West covered with the king, declarer was about ready to claim. Unfortunately, West showed out on the second club, and declarer could count to only 12 tricks.

Declarer was in too much of a hurry to go after clubs. See what happens if declarer cashes another high heart at trick two, on which East discards. Next come three rounds of spades, followed by three diamonds, to which both defenses follow. From the play to the first eight tricks declarer discovers that West started with six hearts and at least three cards in each pointed suit. That leaves room for at most one club in the West hand.

The only chance South has to bring in the club suit without loss is to find West with a bare king of clubs. So the three of clubs is led and, when that fetches the king, the slam is home.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY FEBRUARY 27, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Something may appear to be very practical, but that may change considerably when more information surfaces. Today, there is ample resistance around for anything being pushed.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can wind up a project that has been preoccupying your attention but be careful to avoid a critical superior while later an associate backs you loyally.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Keep busy at improving your charm, appearance at a beauty salon or barber shop of your choice, eliminate blemishes; later put beauty in your work.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Do nothing that can raise the hackles of any family member and then you will be able to be pleasantly off to entertainments that you like.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be careful you say just what you intend in an communications or correspondence whether of an oral or a written nature to avoid trouble.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't do anything of a material nature that can put you behind the eight ball but later be off with charms, get their good will and enjoy yourselves.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You would be wise not to seem

to be too critical or demanding in seeking whatever you now desire but later you can impress experts with financial acumen.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You feel you have too many nonproductive duties to perform but you can soon get them in back of you and go after, obtain things you really want.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't appear to others to be too absorbed in gaining your ends and critical of them while later you can have a happy time with your romantic love.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You could easily get on the wrong side of an influential person by any unwise moves but later you see ways to gain your personal objectives.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) New interests require you handle them with a considerable amount of caution, so study with care; tonight be receptive to a favour from a bigwig.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't be reluctant to attend to whatever promises you have made early in the day, then you will be able to get off to interesting new projects.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Consider well what you have agreed to be with a watchful partner and don't let that person down after which you can handle business matters very well.

Agassi advances to quarterfinals

SCOTTS DALE (R) — Americans Andre Agassi and Malivai Washington posted straight-set victories Thursday advance to the quarterfinals of the \$300,000 Scottsdale Tennis Tournament.

Agassi beat hard-serving countryman Keith Evans, a qualifier playing in only his fourth professional tour stop, 6-1, 6-3.

Earlier, Washington eliminated Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Emilio Sanchez of Spain, Agassi's next opponent, outlasted Gabriel Markus of Argentina, in a pair of tiebreakers 7-6 (7-1) 7-6 (14-12).

Australian Mark Woodforde also reached the quarterfinals, defeating Luiz Mattar of Brazil 6-3, 6-3 and will play Washington.

Derrick Rostagno and eighth-seed Andrei Chesnokov will square off in another quarterfinal and fifth-seeded Brad Gilbert will face South Africa's Markos Ondruska.

Agassi, 22, and ranked eighth in the world, used a punishing groundstroking game and solid service returns.

But he struggled, making just 41 per cent of his first serves and added three double faults against Evans, ranked 37th.

"His big serve (five aces, six double faults), made him dangerous," said Agassi of his opponent's 124 mph (200 kph) serves. "He was serving so big, his only chance out there was if he would've held serve. But that was asking for a little bit too much. He served so hard, I'd catch him in trouble on the return," said Agassi, who broke his opponent four times.

"I'm not at all happy with my serve. At times I struggled to find



Andre Agassi

it. But fortunately my game doesn't live and die in one area."

Washington, a semifinalist last year, utilized an all-court game despite committing seven double faults during the one-hour, 58-minute victory.

"I thought I started out pretty good, hitting the ball solidly, not making many errors. I was cruising through the first set and the final two games of the match. The parts in between I thought I played OK... nothing great but I guess it was well enough to get the job done."

Rottier stops Austin

Tracy Austin's incredible comeback run hit a roadblock when the 30-year-old American was beaten by Stephanie Rottier of the Netherlands 6-1, 6-0 in the third round of the \$375,000 Evert Cup tennis tournament Thursday.

Prior to this week, Austin had played just two matches since 1984, losing both during her 1989 comeback which was cut short by a car accident which required surgery that left a pin in her right knee. She had not beaten a top-ranked player for 10 years.

Top seeded Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States outslugged countrywoman Kimberly Po 6-3, 6-3 in her third round match to advance to the quarterfinals of the 56-player, hard court tournament.

Third-seeded Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria maintained her concentration in the decisive tiebreak to hold off fourth-seeded Rachel McQuillan of Australia 6-4 2-6 7-6 (7-3) in her third round match.

Austin, the 1979 U.S. Open champion who was once ranked number one, admittedly was outplayed by the 76th-ranked Rottier who won the last 11 games of the match by hitting numerous winners from the backcourt and taking advantage of Austin's short balls.

Austin said she had trouble sleeping after her second round win over second-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria, as she was thinking about the numerous congratulatory messages she received from current players like American Michael Chang to past champions like American Rosie Casals.

"I'm still extremely ecstatic about this week," Austin said. "Coming in, my goal was to win one match. To beat someone like Katerina went beyond my goals of the tournament. Obviously, I'm disappointed. I hate losing, but I tried everything I could. She played great. I've had a great tournament. It's just the beginning."

They said the match would now be played under the auspices of a new body, the Professional Chess Association. Both players had agreed to donate 10 per cent of the prize fund towards establishing the body, the statement added.

Kasparov, Short refuse to play in Manchester

LONDON (R) — World champion Garry Kasparov and contender Nigel Short Friday refused to play their World Chess final under the jurisdiction of the International Chess Federation FIDE.

Then said in a statement they were setting up a new professional chess body and invited fresh bids to stage the final.

Manchester was due to stage the 24-game final in August, under a FIDE decision announced earlier this week. But Short, 27, and Kasparov, 29, said they had not been consulted by FIDE before its decision.

The statement said Short, the first Briton to challenge for the World Chess title in more than 100 years, had not been informed by FIDE of the bids made.

It added that FIDE had announced a starting date for the match without consulting the players.

Short and Kasparov said FIDE was not a suitable body to organize the chess world's most important competition.

They said the match would now be played under the auspices of a new body, the Professional Chess Association. Both players had agreed to donate 10 per cent of the prize fund towards establishing the body, the statement added.

Peanuts



Andy Capp

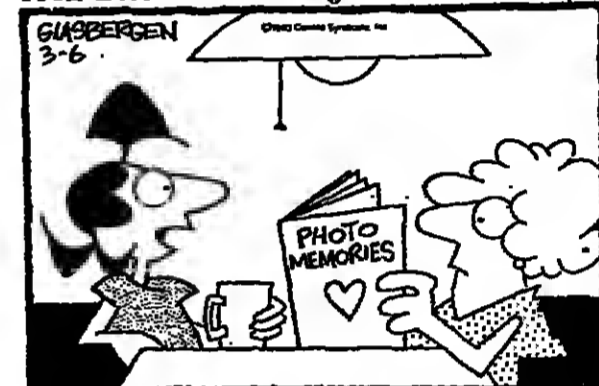


Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

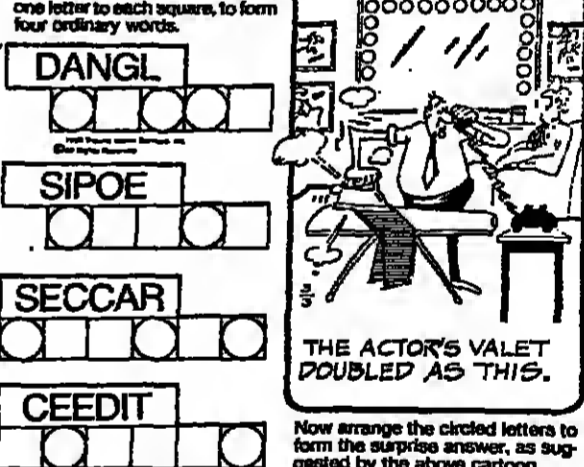
By Glasbergen



"I knew Stanley was getting serious about me when he played our song on his amput."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

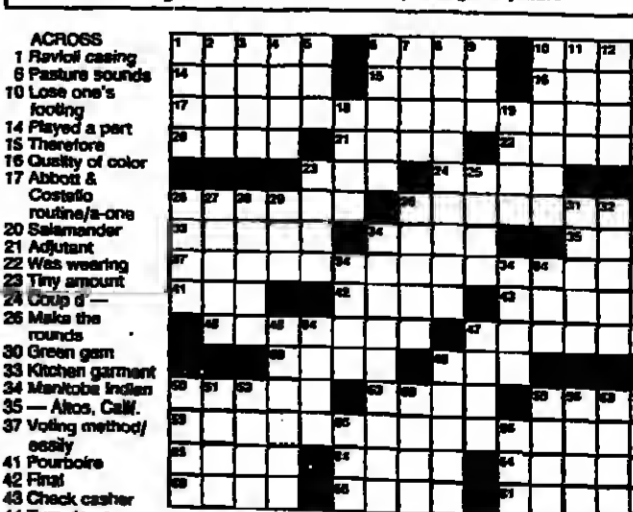


Answer: A "CIRCLED" CIRCLED

Yesterday's Jumble: KNELL WHOSE DEFAME INNATE

Answer: The hardest thing about roller skating — THE SIDEWALK

THE Daily Crossword by George Uquhart



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



Yeltsin urged to take offensive against conservative parliament

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin came under growing pressure from allies Friday to take the offensive against Russia's conservative parliament as a deadline for a power-sharing deal with the legislature passed.

The editor of one major liberal newspaper said Mr. Yeltsin should press for elections to break the deadlock.

"Yeltsin, in whom we invested such hopes, is not in control of events. We see no understanding for the state of affairs and no considered strategy," Vitaly Tretyakov, chief editor of Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper, wrote in a commentary.

At Kremlin talks on Feb. 16, Mr. Yeltsin and parliamentary chief Ruslan Khasbulatov formed a commission to draft a constitutional settlement within 10 days. Mr. Yeltsin said if the commission succeeded, he was ready to drop the referendum idea.

Since then, there has been no progress and parliament has snubbed Mr. Yeltsin's proposals. First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko was quoted by ITAR-TASS News Agency as saying Mr. Yeltsin must go ahead with a planned constitutional referendum if parliament and presidentialism failed to reach an agreement.

"All power in the country has passed into the hands of the Congress of People's Deputies (the supreme legislature)," Mr. Shumeiko said. "I no longer believe a compromise is possible with parliamentary deputies."

Close aide to Mr. Yeltsin and media chief Mikhail Poltoranin said there was no doubt the referendum would go ahead and

described it as the last chance of a peaceful settlement.

"The legislature cannot ride like a steamroller over Russian statehood," he said.

Critics, including Mr. Khasbulatov, insist the referendum, far from sorting out the division of power between the Congress and the president, would only fan political conflict in Russia.

A presidential spokesman said Friday the passing of the deadline did not mean the end of all hopes for compromise.

"The important thing is that working contacts take place every day. We'll see what comes, but the talks are hard," he said.

Mr. Khasbulatov, a man with little popular support but strong influence in provincial power structures, has curbed Mr. Yeltsin's executive powers to the point where one presidential aide compared him recently with Britain's Queen Elizabeth.

The comment was exaggerated, but Mr. Yeltsin faces serious problems in resisting attempts by central and regional legislatures to claw back powers to stop his radical reforms laying waste to Russia.

Mr. Yeltsin was directly elected to the newly-created presidency in June 1991 without clearly-defined executive powers. Russia has failed so far to adopt a post-Communist constitution setting out the roles of legislature, executive and judiciary.

The legislature firmly controls the budget, the Central Bank, the appointment of several key security ministries and administers state property through parliamentary agencies.

Congress could extend its power

as the supreme organ of state power at the next session by voting to make government subordinate directly to parliament, which was elected in 1990.

It could also vote to call off the April referendum, even if no powersharing agreement is reached by the commission.

The smaller standing parliament meets next week to set a date for the Congress, which is expected to meet in early March.

Mr. Tretyakov, editor of Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper, suggested a series of possible outcomes of the present struggle, including an effective coup by either of the two sides.

The most likely outcome, however, was a continuation of the present struggle, leaving a weakened and divided administration, unable to cope with a serious crisis such as hyperinflation.

He called for fresh elections in April of May. "The current president would have a good chance of winning. His charisma has far from faded completely. Ruslan Khasbulatov, if anyone is afraid of him, has no chance."

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said in an article published Friday that he was worried by a tendency in the West to isolate his country and warned that this would strengthen the hand of nationalists.

"I am worried by how quickly a school of thought has sprung up in the West which maintains that it is better to have dealings with a weakened Russia, left alone with its troubles," he wrote in the NATO Review, an official

alliance publication.

"This selling short of a power which is historically destined to be great is not only unrealistic but dangerous, because it kindles nationalism and confrontational attitudes both in Russia and throughout the world," Mr. Kozyrev wrote.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his reformers are locked in a battle for power with the country's parliament, a struggle which the West is worried could bring an end to reforms.

Mr. Kozyrev appealed for closer ties with NATO and cooperation through institutions like the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to keep nationalism under control.

"If ... we began to be seen in Western capitals as something 'unnecessary' or 'dangerous', this would only encourage our 'national patriots' to increase their attacks on current Russian policy and would sustain their chauvinist desires to close off Russia," Mr. Kozyrev wrote.

Mr. Kozyrev shocked the world last December when he gave a speech at a European security conference that appeared to portray a new hardline Russian foreign policy.

He later withdrew the remarks, saying that he wanted to show what could happen if the forces of reform failed.

"This course of events, which would certainly not be in our common interests, must not be allowed to come about and the strategy of partnership (with the West) must serve to guarantee this," Mr. Kozyrev wrote in the article.



SOUP KITCHEN: Bosnians line up at a soup kitchen in the centre of Sarajevo. U.S. President Bill Clinton proposed a food airlift into Bosnia. Herzegovina with control of the operation retained by the United Nations (AFP photo)

N. Korea rejects new IAEA demands

VIENNA (R) — North Korea Friday rejected fresh demands by the United Nations nuclear watchdog to open up two of its military sites for inspection, branding the move a serious violation of its sovereignty.

North Korean delegates who attended talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of governors in Vienna said the body was openly siding with Pyongyang's adversaries and was in danger of losing its impartiality.

"That is why our country is being forced ... to adopt self-defensive measures to safeguard our sovereignty," the North Korean delegation said in a statement.

The statement did not specify what measures Pyongyang would take.

The IAEA board of governors, which includes representatives from 35 member states, Thursday gave North Korea one month to comply with its demands to allow inspectors to visit two sites at Yongbyon believed to be secret nuclear installations.

The IAEA resolution said the board would meet again no later than March 25 to consider North Korea's response. If Pyongyang still refused, the board would consider what it called "further measures."

"Our country will in no way accept this resolution which demands special inspections of two military sites which have nothing to do with nuclear activities," the North Korean delegates said.

North Korea, a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, also agreed last year to sign a "safeguards agreement" which permits inspectors to ensure nuclear equipment and materials are used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

"The adoption of this unjust resolution is a flagrant violation of our country's sovereignty and creates serious difficulties in complying with the safeguards agreement," they added.

Kim names academics to Seoul cabinet

SEOUL (Agencies) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam named a completely new cabinet Friday, appointing academics to head his foreign and unification policy teams and pragmatists to tackle economic life.

Sworn in Thursday as the first civilian head of state for more than three decades, Mr. Kim retained no incumbent ministers in his 24-member cabinet.

"President Kim has worked hard to find new and reform-oriented figures who can faithfully carry out his pledges to build a new Korea," a spokesman for Mr. Kim said.

Han Sung-Jon, political science professor at Korea University, will replace Lee Sang-Ock as foreign minister and Han Wan-Sang, professor of political science at Seoul National University, will take over from Choi Young-Choul as unification minister.

Political change in policy towards North Korea, adding that the new unification minister was an advocate of a more flexible and open-minded attitude towards the isolated Communist state.

Mr. Kim, 65, predicted Thursday unification of Korea before the end of the century and offered to meet North Korea's ageing Stalinist leader Kim Il-Sung, to plot a course towards reconciliation.

Relations between the two Koreas have frozen over a bitter dispute over the North's suspected development of nuclear weapons.

In a break with the past, Mr. Kim and Prime Minister Hwang In-Sung, who was named Monday, also picked an academic to head the powerful internal security agency, a post that normally went to an army general.

Kim Deok, dean of Hankook University for Foreign Studies, will replace ex-General Lee Hyun-Won as the head of the Agency for National Security Planning (NSP), long accused of torturing political dissidents and fabricating Communist charges.

President Kim appointed a record number of three women to cabinet posts Friday to show his commitment to his campaign pledge to stress women's rights.

"We hope the appointment of three women ministers will contribute to boosting women's rights," said Kim Kyung O, leader of the National Federation of Women's Groups.

In the past, one woman has usually been appointed to the 24-member cabinet, as the second state minister for political affairs, specialising in issues pertaining to women, children and the elderly.

Mr. Kim appointed a woman again to that post, Kwon Young Ja, 56. Ms. Kwon currently serves as head of the government supported Korean Women's Development Institute and was formerly an outspoken journalist, active in women's social welfare issues.

But Mr. Kim's selection of two other women to the cabinet came as a surprise.

Hwang San-Sung, 49, a lawyer, television commentator and former judge, was named minister of the environment. She has been an advocate of the equal rights movement in Korea.

Park Yang-Sil, 58, an obstetrician, was named minister for health and social affairs.

Dr. Park has led a movement to help Vietnamese children fathered by South Korean soldiers during the war in Indochina. She also has been active in anti-nuclear and equal rights movements as the head of the Association of Korean Women Doctors.

Haitian bishop beaten after mass

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (R) — A prominent Haitian bishop was beaten and kicked Thursday after a funeral mass for victims of a ferry boat disaster turned into the largest demonstration for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide since his overthrow in a bloody 1991 coup.

"Had we not been there, Bishop (Willy) Roumeus might have been killed," said Michael Moller, coordinator of a joint U.N.-Organisation of American States mission that arrived in Haiti 11 days ago to monitor human rights.

Bishop Roumeus, a critic of the military-backed government, was thrown to the ground, pummelled and kicked when he left the Port-Au-Prince cathedral after delivering the eulogy. An aide to the bishop said some of the assailants were armed.

Bishop Roumeus's glasses were broken, his purple clerical sash ripped and he was repeatedly punched in the face, according to a diplomat who witnessed the beating.

Diplomats and members of the U.N. team jumped between the churchman and his attackers, and diplomats whisked him off in a limousine, first to an unidentified embassy and then to a house used to shelter church figures.

German Reichstag fire still controversial 60 years later

BONN (R) — Sixty years on, historians still argue over who started the fire that gutted Germany's Reichstag parliament building and gave the Nazis the pretext to crack down on opponents.

The fire destroyed the plenary hall on Feb. 27, 1933 — barely a month after Adolf Hitler came to power.

Dutch Communist Marinus Van Der Lubbe, detained in the burning building, was blamed for the blaze.

"Even today it is being disputed whether the fire was an act of a loner or if it was staged by the Nazis," the weekly Die Woche wrote in one of several re-examinations of the incident.

The Reichstag, built 100 years ago by Otto Von Bismarck, Germany's first chancellor, is in the limelight again after German unification in 1990.

The neo-classical building, bombed during World War II, was just on the western side of the Communist wall that cut Berlin in two, for almost three decades.

With Berlin restored as capital of Germany, the Bonn parliament will move into the Reichstag within 10 years and an architect's contest for its renovation is drawing to a close.

be, who told police he set the Reichstag ablaze to make workers "fight for freedom", was found guilty of arson and guillotined 11 months after the fire.

Most historians today believe he acted alone, although Hitler's court suggested he had unknown Communist partners.

But some insist the fire was the work of the Nazis, who needed a provocation to pass the enabling act, which wiped out democratic rights and led to the first roundup of political opponents for the concentration camps.

Walther Hofer, retired director of the University of Bern's Institute of History, said the arrest of thousands of opponents within hours of the fire indicated careful planning.

Mr. Hofer, co-publisher of a book about the fire, said the fact the court had to acquit four Communist co-defendants because they had perfect alibis showed the Nazis made up the charges.

He said technical investigations in 1970 had shown one man could not possibly have ignited the wood-paneled plenary hall in the limited time Van Der Lubbe had.

"It would have been impossible to turn a plenary hall of 11,000 cubic metres into a flaming sea within a few minutes with the equipment at hand," he told Die Woche.

U.S. historian William Shirer, author of The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich, believed the Nazis had learned of Van Der Lubbe's arson plans from his barroom boasting about his revolutionary exploits and doused the plenary hall in advance to ensure it was completely destroyed.

"The coincidence that the Nazis had found a demented Communist arsonist who was out to do exactly what they themselves had determined to do seems incredible but is nevertheless supported by the evidence," he wrote.

Court records quote Van Der Lubbe as saying he ignited the fire with matches and charcoal fire starters but neither the Nazis nor their opponents supported this notion.

"The Communists were convinced the Nazis had set the fire," German historian Fritz Tobias, who believes Van Der Lubbe acted alone, told Die Woche.

"Experience shows that lone perpetrators in sensational attacks are always regarded with suspicion," he said. "People find it hard to accept that a man without a name is capable of interfering with big politics at his own initiative and changing the course of history."

COLUMN

Madonna pictures bring slap on wrist

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese firm got off with a light fine Friday for defying local obscenity laws by not retouching nude pictures in Madonna's book Sex. Tokyo customs officials ordered Toppan Printing Co Ltd to pay a fine of almost 100,000 yen (\$850) for skirting Japanese censors and printing the original photographs in the Japanese-language version of the book. The local edition of Madonna's coffee-table shocker, complete with a CD, retails for 6,000 yen (\$50). The first batch of 150,000 copies sold out last Dec. 1 when it reached Japanese bookstores. "We accept the decision and promise to be more careful in the future," a Toppan Company official said. Toppan imported negatives of the sexually explicit, sado-masochistic photographs that fill Sex without filing a required report to customs officials at Tokyo's Narita Airport held up imports of the American edition of Sex to allow government censors to scratch out all glimpses of public hair. Japan's bizarre censorship laws prohibit pictures showing public hair and genitalia but place no restraints on graphic scenes of sexual violence, including child rape and bestiality. Over the past year, authorities have begun to bow to demands from publishers and artists to permit the depiction of public hair, particularly when it affects artistic expression.

Number of Japan gangsters falls after new curbs

TOKYO (R) — Total membership of Japan's crime syndicates fell slightly last year after tough new curbs on their activities, the national police agency said. The number of "yakuza" gangsters fell by 7,200 to 56,600 at the end of last year, an agency spokesman said. The anti-organized crime law, passed last March, gave police new powers to crack down on activities such as extortion. Police previously lacked the power to rein in gangsters without evidence that they had used violence to intimidate victims. Gang leaders have challenged the new law in police hearings, arguing that their groups are traditional, organisations dating back hundreds of years. The spokesman said membership of the three largest syndicates increased slightly at the expense of smaller groups last year.

Canada reinstates Victoria Cross for heroism

OTTAWA (R) — Canada will reinstate the Victoria Cross as its highest military decoration, ending a long campaign by Canadian soldiers and veterans of two world wars, the prime minister's office said. The Victoria Cross, awarded for exceptional heroism, was first instituted by Queen Victoria during the Crimean War over a century ago. Ninety-three Canadians received the V.C., the last one awarded posthumously to pilot Robert Gray for an attack on a Japanese destroyer in the last days of the World War II. But Canada dropped the medal in 1972 when it created its own military bravery medals as a further step by the former colony to cut links with Britain. The Canadian Victoria Cross, which has been approved by Queen Elizabeth II, will be awarded for "conspicuous bravery...in the presence of the enemy" and Canadian troops serving as United Nations peacekeepers will be eligible. The campaign to get the medal reinstated was boosted by support from Major-General Lewis MacKenzie, Canada's best-known soldier. He led Canadian peacekeepers who secured Sarajevo Airport last year.

Girl can 'divorce' mother — U.K. court

LEEDS, England (R) — A 12-year-old girl who sought to "divorce" her mother may stay with her foster family, an English High Court judge has ruled. Lawyers said the girl, who cannot be named, could be the youngest child in Britain to make use of a law passed in 1989 allowing her to seek another home. The case attracted attention last year when the girl, then aged 11, tried to legally "divorce" her mother. Proceedings were later dropped when lawyers agreed that local authorities should take over the case. On Tuesday, a High Court judge in the northern English town of Leeds ruled the girl could stay with foster parents who had taken care of her from the age of three months until she returned to her mother at the age of eight.

PAC to take tough line in talks with Pretoria

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The radical black Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) said Friday it would never accede to government demands that its armed wing suspend the struggle against white rule in South Africa.

"The government wants APLA to go on a 'holiday', that is not going to happen," said PAC Western Cape official Andiso Ntsodo, referring to what he said was the first item on the government's agenda at forthcoming talks with the black radical group.

Monday's discussions, in the Botswana capital Gaborone, are the first since President F.W. de Klerk called off talks with the PAC after its military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army, killed several whites in attacks late last year.

Asked to comment on Mr. Ntsodo's remarks, Law and Order Ministry spokesman Craig Kotze described the Gaborone discussions as a bid by the government to get rid of obstacles to planned multi-party talks leading to South Africa's first non-racial elections.

Stressing he did not want to pre-empt the meeting, Mr. Kotze refused to say whether the government was hopeful of a breakthrough.

U.S. prosecutor: Police delayed taking King for treatment

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two policemen taking an injured Robby King from one hospital to another detained for nearly two hours, stopping at their station to show the beating victim to colleagues, a prosecutor said.

In an opening statement in a crowded courtroom, Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Clymer also accused the two defendants of trying to convince medical personnel at both hospitals that Mr. King was under the influence of the hallucinogen PCP when there was no such evidence.

The surprise allegations about officers Laurence Powell and Timothy Wind came as the federal government launched its effort to do what state prosecutors could not — win convictions in the videotaped beating of the black motorist.

The defence began its opening statements with the same strategy that proved successful before, portraying the officers' actions as appropriate and within police department guidelines.

"The conduct that was engaged in was not illegal, but was directly in response to the conduct of Mr. King," said Ira Salzman, attorney for Sgt. Stacey Koon.

Mr. Powell's lawyer, Michael Stone, stressed that the officers believed Mr. King, a large man, was "a duster," or a person on PCP.

"You will hear that King had the classic symptoms of a duster," he told jurors, saying the motorist was "bathed in sweat," glassy eyed and seemed to have "superhuman strength."

He also disclosed that the defence will call three witnesses who testified for the prosecution in the earlier trial: California Highway Patrol officers Melaine and Tim Singer and Mr. King's passenger, Bryant

Allen, who said Mr. King's behaviour that night scared him.

The acquittals of Mr. Powell, Mr. Wind, Sgt. Koon and another white officer on most state charges ignited three days of deadly mayhem in Los Angeles, and the federal trial has had an undertone of racial tension since jury selection began.

The multiracial jury listened rapidly, sometimes leaning forward in their seats, as Mr. Clymer outlined the case and played for them a newly enhanced version of the videotape shot by an amateur cameraman.

Mr. Clymer said he would prove that Mr. Powell and Mr. Wind, along with officer Theodore Briseno and their supervisor, Sgt. Koon, violated Mr. King's civil rights. He said the three officers brutally clubbed, kicked and stomped the black motorist who "was not a threat," and Sgt. Koon did nothing to stop it.

Mr. Briseno's lawyer minimised his client's role in the beating, saying a scene in which prosecutors say Mr. Briseno stomped on Mr. King's neck with heavy boots was just a gentle effort to keep Mr. King from rising and drawing more baton blows.

Attorney Harland Braun also told the jury that Mr. Briseno's boots only looked heavy. Holding up a boot, he said, "It's very thin. It's almost like a ballet slipper. It wasn't used as a defensive weapon."

It was clear that Mr. Briseno will not testify against his codefendants as he did in the state trial, and Mr. Braun said a scene in which Mr. Briseno reaches out to stop Mr. Powell's baton merely shows "a remarkable disagreement between two officers."

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Troops desert at Russian launch site

MOSCOW (R) — About 20 Russian soldiers at the Baikonur space centre in Kazakhstan deserted last week in protest over working conditions at the launch-site for Russia's giant proton rocket, ITAR-TASS News Agency said Friday.

The incident came a year after construction units at Baikonur mutinied over living conditions, burning down buildings and ransacking stores. Four people were killed in the riots. TASS quoted the local newspaper Express-K as saying the deserters, who complained they were being forced to work too hard to make up for underpayment, drove off in a stolen truck. A spokesman for the Russian army's space forces said the soldiers had been detained, but he gave no details of the incident.

Tank explodes, policeman shot in England

WARRINGTON, England (R) — Police called in anti-terrorist units and launched a manhunt Friday after a policeman was shot, a car hijacked and a gas storage tank blown up in a series of violent incidents in northern England. The cause of the blast was not known but a spokesman for British gas said it was possible an explosive device had been used. Police in Warrington, near Manchester, were trying to determine if the incidents were related. They said they were working with Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist unit, but declined to say whether they suspected the Irish Republican Army, which is fighting to oust Britain from Northern Ireland. "You can draw your own conclusions," said one police official. The IRA has launched a series of bomb attacks in British cities, including Manchester, in recent months. Police said they were searching for an armed man who hijacked a car and was believed to have helped two others shoot and injure a policeman when he stopped a van near Warrington town centre about midnight. The three men escaped.

U.S. police raid suicide doctor's home

ROYAL OAK, Michigan (R) — Three hours after Michigan Governor John Engler signed a law making assisted suicide a felony, police armed with search warrants raided the home of suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian and that of a friend who helped him. A spokesman for the Royal Oak Police Department declined to comment on why investigators were searching Dr. Kevorkian's home. Local television reports said, however, police were looking for evidence that one of Dr. Kevorkian's 15 suicides changed his mind minutes before the retired pathologist, dubbed "Dr. Death," helped him take his life. Police were also searching the home of Dr. Kevorkian's friend in Waterford township, where former security guard Hugh Gale took his life earlier this month with Dr. Kevorkian's help. A spokeswoman for an anti-euthanasia group called the Advocates for Life Ministries, however, said the organisation has evidence proving Mr. Gale did not want to commit suicide.

Khmer Rouge steal more U.N. vehicles

PHNOM PENH (AP) — The Khmer Rouge stole two U.N. vehicles and two radios from four U.N. personnel at gunpoint, after luring them into guerrilla territory for a prearranged meeting, a U.N. spokesman said Friday. Thursday's theft was the second Khmer Rouge guerrilla raid in less than a week. U.N. officials said Tuesday that the Khmer Rouge hit an American U.N. peacekeeper while stealing his vehicle in the central province of Kompong Thom last weekend. "There is a disturbing pattern in all these incidents," spokesman Eric Falt said. "It is unacceptable that anybody, let alone a faction that signed the Paris peace accords, would shamelessly exert undue pressure on U.N. personnel through armed threats." Khmer Rouge official Meas Chey said he knew nothing about the incident.

All official candidates elected in Cuba polls

HAVANA (R) — All 589 official candidates, including President Fidel Castro, were elected to form Cuba's next National Assembly in Wednesday's one-party general elections on the island, the National Electoral Commission said Thursday. While the polls were the first direct national elections on the Caribbean island in more than 30 years of Communist rule, they had offered no opposition or alternative choices to the ruling Communist Party and official candidate lists. Smooth election of the 589 parliamentary candidates had been widely expected following an intense official propaganda campaign by the Communist authorities calling on voters to massively back official candidate lists. The U.S. State Department said Thursday Cuba's parliamentary elections were neither free nor fair. "Regrettably, yesterday's elections were not an exercise in democracy," the department said in a statement. "Truly free and fair elections have never been held under Cuba's current government." Asked about a statement by Cuban President Fidel Castro that he might step down in a few years, State Department spokesman Joseph Synder said, "We think Cuba would be served better by another leader than Fidel Castro."